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**Santa María Ixcatlan, Oaxaca:
From Colonial Cacicazgo to Modern Municipio**

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**Santa María Ixcatlan, Oaxaca:
From Colonial Cacicazgo to Modern Municipio**

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Dedication

Al pueblo de Santa Maria Ixcatlan.

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Isolated in the mountains of the Mixteca Alta in Oaxaca, Santa María Ixcatlan is the last surviving settlement of the Ixcatec-speaking people. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, Ixcatlan was a native señorio whose nobility ruled numerous communities and controlled the land and its resources. This dissertation offers an examination of the ethnohistory and historical geography of the region, including the significant maps that have been produced throughout the centuries. Information was gathered from various archival repositories and field work conducted in Ixcatlan. Some observations are made about the archaeological remains located within the municipio.

The study examines the forces that shape the Ixcatec cacicazgo after the conquest of New Spain and the establishment of colonial authority. It traces the historical holdings of the community through Mexican independence and the liberal reforms of the nineteenth century. The effects of the revolution of 1910 and the agrarian reform movement that followed are considered as well. Special attention is given to the

contentions and conflicts that have developed between Ixcatlan and its neighbors in the twentieth century.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Santa María Ixcatlan is located on the northern edge of the Mixteca Alta of Oaxaca just before the mountains of this region fall into the Tehuacan Valley of Puebla. For much of its history, Ixcatlan has been an isolated and remote community. The easiest access into the area today is by means of an unimproved road that leads east from San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca (Figures 1 and 2). This dirt track then turns north and winds through the small *agencias* of Río Blanco and Río Poblano and then up onto the crest of El Mirador. The road passes just above Palo Solo, an *agencia* of San Miguel Tequixtepec, and continues down the eastern slope of the ridge into Ixcatlan. The thirty kilometer trip takes an hour and a half when the surface is hard and dry. Travel time can easily be twice that under less favorable conditions.

The community of Ixcatlan rests on the bench of an elongated valley formed by the Río Sabino (Figure 3). This small stream flows east towards San Miguel Guautla and San Pedro Nodón (Figure 4). Still further east are San Pedro Jocotipac and the Cuicatlan Cañada. The landscape south of the Río Sabino is dominated by El Murillo, a large, heavily forested mountain. It forms a very formidable and effective barrier between Ixcatlan and its neighbors to the south. A large ridge of hills extends directly to the north of the village from Gandudo on the west to Cuanda in the east. These uplands contain an expanse of wooded areas and open meadows. (Figure 5) North beyond these mountains the terrain quickly drops through a series of arroyos and canyons to the Río Xuquila and the Río Salado. (Figure 6) The towns of San Juan Los Cues and Santa María Tecomavaca are located northeast of Ixcatlan, across the Río Salado.

Little research of any type has been conducted in Santa María Ixcatlan. Sherburne Cook and Roberto Weitlaner visited the community in 1939 and again in 1948.

Cook returned in 1956, accompanied by Woodrow Borah, for another brief stay. Cook has published the only significant monograph concerning Ixcatlan. His primary interest was “the material culture and human ecology” of the community.¹ This work examines the physical environment of the local area and the economic conditions of the Ixcatec. He also made some historical and ethnographic observations. Cook has been the major source of information about Ixcatlan over the years and his study has provided most of the resource material for other authors who mention the Ixcatec.

Walter Hoppe also visited the community in 1961 and collaborated with Weitlaner on a short description of Ixcatlan for the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*.² Most recently Miguel Bartolomé has prepared several publications regarding the history of the Ixcatec and their language.³ Carlos Rincón has offered an analysis of two important historical documents that concern Ixcatlan, the *Plan topographique* and the Lienzo of Ixcatlan (Seler I).⁴ Michael Swanton and Sebastian van Doesburg have also published a study of the lienzo.

I first ventured into Santa María Ixcatlan during the summer of 1990. It was curiosity, more than anything else, that drew me to the area. I had seen the *relación geográfica* from Ixcatlan in the Benson Latin American Collection on many occasions.⁵ I became intrigued by its contents and decided to visit the community. During that brief initial stay, Jovito Jiménez Dorantes, the *Presidente municipal* at the time, asked if I would be willing to help them know more about their history. This dissertation is a result of his request.

¹ Cook, 1958: 1.

² Hoppe and Wietlaner, 1969

³ Bartolome, 1991, 1996, 1999.

⁴ Rincón, 1996a, 1996b.

⁵ JGI XXIV-7.

I returned to Ixcatlan in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1997. During these visits I familiarized myself with the local geography, collected place names, and recorded oral histories. I was also able to observe and participate in the daily life and social activities in the community. My trips were staggered at different times throughout the calendar year, giving me the opportunity to witness many different special events during the annual ritual cycle of the Ixcatec. I present my observations in an effort to update the previously published descriptions of Santa Maria Ixcatlan and its people.

To enhance my field work in Ixcatlan, I conducted archival research in the Archivo General de Nación and the Fondo Reservado at the Biblioteca Nacional in Mexico City. The archives of the Secretaria de Reforma Agraria not only contained records pertaining to the recent land issues, but also preserved copies of earlier historical documents. The holdings of the Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca were very useful in this regard, as well. The *ayuntamiento* of Ixcatlan was kind enough to grant me access to the maps and manuscripts still preserved in the municipal archives of the community. Primary sources related to the history of Ixcatlan proved to be somewhat scarce, but valuable nonetheless.

This investigation examines the ethnohistory and the historical geography of the area. It traces land tenure and communal holdings of Ixcatlan from the early years following the Spanish conquest to the modern period. The study considers the forces that shaped the Ixcatec cacicazgo after the conquest of New Spain and the establishment of colonial authority. It follows the territorial land holdings of the community through Mexican independence and the liberal reforms of the Nineteenth Century. The effects of the Revolution of 1910 and the agrarian reform movement that followed are considered, as well. Attention is given to the contentions and conflicts that have developed in the

Twentieth Century between Ixcatlan and its neighbors and the challenges the Ixcatec confront as they seek to survive and maintain their community in the new millennium.

BACKGROUND

Modern Ixcatlan is a small rural community by any standard. The town itself consists of three parallel streets that run east and west (Figures 7 and 8). The main public buildings are located on the east end of the village. The whitewashed church stands on an elevated site and is visible from everywhere in the valley (Figure 9). The structure dominates the visible landscape. Nearby are the plaza and municipal offices. A cement basketball court and community mill are found in front of the *presidencia municipal*. The old *palacio municipal* still stands on the east side of the plaza. It once contained the school and *juzgado* (court). The structure has been recently renovated and is still utilized for civic functions.

Little has changed in Ixcatlan since Cook last visited the community in 1956. I am confident that he would still recognize the small village he knew over fifty years ago, despite its modifications. The old techniques of constructing homes with *quijotes*⁶ of agave or split palm trunks have been abandoned in favor of local limestone and imported concrete block. (Figure 10) Terracotta tile has been given preference over palm-thatched roofs. The traditional form of construction, which provides for good air circulation, continues to be used for kitchen facilities. Cooking fires continue to be fueled with wood.

During the last few years several large homes have been erected in the village by individuals who reside in Mexico City. These dwellings are similar in appearance to those built in the suburbs of the metropolis, rather than conforming to the local

⁶ The flower stalk of an agave or century plant.

architectural style. They sit empty most of the time and serve only to provide lodging when the owners come to Ixcatlan to visit with family or attend a community celebration.

There have been several public structures added to improve community services. A public water supply was developed in 1966 to pipe water into town. Electric service was provided in 1971. The new municipal building was constructed beginning in 1984 with the help of state and federal funds. It was dedicated on September 6, 1986 and replaced the Porfirian-era structure. A secondary school was inaugurated in 1988. Prior to that time an elementary education was all that was available to the Ixcatec. The *telesecundaria* was built with funds provided by the federal government's *Solidaridad* program. It offers instruction through satellite broadcasts which are transmitted from Mexico City. Teachers are provided from outside the community to direct the program. The Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social (IMSS) provided a health clinic in 1990. This facility is presently staffed by a resident doctor and nurse.

Another very visible enhancement to Ixcatlan was the construction of a formal plaza with concrete sidewalks, flowerbeds and a gazebo. (Figure 11) It replaced a bare patch of ground that had served as the plaza over the centuries. President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León came to dedicate the new addition on May 15, 1995. Over a period of several years, beginning in 2000, the residents of Ixcatlan paved the streets of town with concrete. A new civic auditorium was built in 2005. It is now used for all community meetings, programs, and social events. The hemispherical metal roof has truly altered the skyline of Ixcatlan.

One major change that is very obvious is the improved means of communications that have linked Ixcatlan with the outside world. A telephone line was brought into town to coincide with the President Zedillo's visit in 1995. The connection was installed in the store of Magdaleno Guzmán, the municipal president at the time. Calls are received

for residents, who are then paged by loudspeaker. Outgoing calls are charged a flat rate per minute to simplify the billing process.

A road was built in 1963 from Ixcatlan to Palo Solo. This provided Ixcatlan with a connection to Tequixtepec and the outside world. The Ixcatec had originally wanted to go through Río Poblano and connect to Coixtlahuaca, but they were denied that option by the local inhabitants. The road towards Palo Solo was later extended along the Mirador ridge and on to Río Poblano, making vehicular travel to Coixtlahuaca possible.

The citizens of Ixcatlan also collaborated to construct a road down to Tecomavaca. Heavy equipment, rented and operated by the association of former residents, was used to cut the track. This route provided access to the Tehuacan Valley. The road has fallen into a state of disrepair and is little used today.

A road east to San Pedro Nodón was also built by the Ixcatec. In 1999 the Governor of Oaxaca, himself a native of Cuicatlan, initiated a project to improve this route and provide his hometown with better access to the Mixteca Alta. On July 15 of that year, a serious earthquake, with an epicenter near Tehuacan, struck the region and caused considerable damage in the states of Oaxaca and Puebla. The machinery being utilized on the road construction was removed from Ixcatlan to assist in clean-up efforts. Another strong quake in September, this one centered on the Oaxacan coast, precluded its return to Ixcatlan. The road passes through Ixcatlan and approaches the foot of the Mirador ridge, but dead ends there. From this point the west-bound traveler is required to follow the old route through Río Poblano and on to Coixtlahuaca.

These roads are yet unpaved and can still be hazardous, or even impassable, in inclement weather. Nevertheless, the long and arduous trips on foot or horseback to neighboring communities are now a thing of the past. Ixcatec merchants are now able to retrieve goods for resale in the community on a regular basis. Most make the trip to the

market in Tamazulapan every Wednesday morning. They are also able to deliver the palm hats produced in the community to the finishers in Tehuacan with much less effort. Itinerant peddlers appear in town on occasion to sell such things as clothing, food stuffs, flowers and building materials. Even soft drink and beer distributors make periodic deliveries to Ixcatlan.

The access of the Ixcatec to the outside was greatly enhanced in 1995 with the opening of a new toll road which connects Oaxaca de Juarez and Mexico City. The inhabitants of the region no longer have to work their way to the Pan American Highway at Tejuapan. Passing just west of Coixtlahuaca, the new highway has cut the travel time from that point to the state capitol to an hour and a half. Tehuacan is now only an hour away by car. The trip to Mexico City is less than five hours. With the new road, first class bus service has been introduced to Coixtlahuaca. Previously only second class carriers dared venture into the region, since it meant leaving the highway at Tejuapan and navigating the narrow roads that wind through the mountains.

POPULATION

Throughout its history the population of Ixcatlan has fluctuated substantially. The current population is 595, according to the last census.⁷ The estimate for the pre-Columbian population of the community is based on the figure of “eight thousand Indians” given in the *relación geográfica*.⁸ The typical colonial custom was to only count those individuals who paid tribute, generally heads of households. Based on this, Cook and Borah speculate that the total population was 32,000 inhabitants.⁹ This calculation appears to be very overstated. Spores notes that the archaeological surveys in the Mixteca Alta indicate that the area was far less densely populated than the census

⁷ Censo, 2000.

⁸ JGI XXIV-7.

⁹ Cook and Borah, 1968.

implies. "Sites are simply not numerous or large enough to have contained anywhere near the population suggested by Borah and Cook."¹⁰ It is now generally accepted that the population of Ixcatlan was 10,000 at the time of Spanish contact.¹¹

The *relación geográfica* records that there were 300 inhabitants in Ixcatlan in 1579.¹² According to the document there were only 140 in the *cabecera*, with the remainder scattered among three *estancias*. This translates to a total population of 1,200, applying the statistical method of Cook and Borah. This significant decline in the population is blamed upon the *encomendero*, who removed the Ixcatec to work in his mines. There it is said that half the individuals died and the other half fled to avoid the hard labor.¹³ I suspect the various epidemics that occurred in the early colonial period also had a drastic effect on the population. Outbreaks of smallpox, measles, typhus and mumps devastated the native population of New Spain during the sixteenth century.¹⁴

The population figures for Ixcatlan for the next century and a half have not been located. This time was evidently not a good one for the Ixcatec. While the population in other portions of the Mixteca Alta was recovering from the tragedy of the sixteenth century,¹⁵ that of Ixcatlan continued to decline. The 1742 survey conducted by Villaseñor y Sánchez lists 83 families in the community.¹⁶ This figure represents a total of only 406 inhabitants.¹⁷

The population of Ixcatlan apparently reached its lowest point in 1803, as Mexico contemplated its independence from Spain. Fray Matías Rodríguez, the curate of San

¹⁰ Spores 1984:94.

¹¹ Hoppe and Weitlaner, 1969.

¹² JGI XXIV-7.

¹³ JGI XXIV-7.

¹⁴ Prem, 1992.

¹⁵ Cook and Borah, 1968.

¹⁶ Villaseñor and Sanchez, 1742.

¹⁷ Cook and Borah, 1968.

Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca, conducted a census of the communities in his parish. He found only 361 residents in Ixcatlan.¹⁸ As the nineteenth century continued, the population of Ixcatlan began to slowly recuperate. By 1827 there were 382 citizens.¹⁹ There were still only 441 Ixcatecs in 1844.²⁰ The population increased more rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century and climbed to 634 in 1872²¹ and then 886 in 1895.²² Over the next fifty years there is some fluctuation recorded in the population of Ixcatlan, but it remains fairly stable until it peaks at 1,113 inhabitants in 1945.²³ Since that time, the population has declined to its currently level of 595.²⁴ (Figure 8)

The Ixcatec suggest several reasons for their diminished population in the twentieth century, including emigration, local conflict, and government sponsored contraception. It appears that most of those who leave Ixcatlan move to Oaxaca, Tehuacan or Mexico City. Recently there has been some optimism expressed by the Ixcatec concerning the growth of their community. They note that the once sparsely-populated classrooms are filling with school-age children.

LANGUAGE

The region surrounding Santa María Ixcatlan is linguistically diverse. Chocho is spoken in the Coixtlahuaca basin. The communities directly to the south of Ixcatlan are comprised of Mixtec speakers. Cuicatec is spoken in the Cañada to the east. Mazatec is widely spoken in numerous villages located in mountains just east of Teotitlan del Camino. The areas directly north are inhabited by Popoloca and Nahuatl speakers. These

¹⁸ Huesca et.al., 1984.

¹⁹ Murguía y Galardi, 1827

²⁰ *Memoria*, 1844.

²¹ *Memoria*, 1872

²² *Censo*, 1895

²³ *Censo*, 1945

²⁴ *Censo*, 1995.

languages are native to central and southern Puebla. Ixcatlan is the last surviving settlement of the Ixcatec-speaking people.

Presently there is very little description of the Ixcatec language. María Teresa Fernandez de Miranda prepared a brief study of the pronominal system and a phonetic inventory.²⁵ The same researcher also published the only Ixcatec dictionary which is available.²⁶ The only other printed resources concerning the language is a primer of basic word phrases.²⁷ No systematic study of the morphology or grammar of the language has ever been undertaken.

Ixcatec belongs to the Popolocan group of languages within the Otomanguean family, together with Chocho, Popoloca, and Mazatec. The contiguous proximity of the of Ixcatlan homeland to the great majority of the Otomanguean languages led Harvey²⁸ to suggest that it may be the original homeland of the linguistic family. This hypothesis is dubious, however.

The grouping of the Popolocan languages was first proposed by Mechling.²⁹ González Casanova³⁰ later realized that Mazatec was the least representative of the group, so he renamed it Popolocan. The classification of these four languages is now universally accepted. The historical relationships among the members of the group are still being questioned. The initial reconstruction of Popolocan was undertaken by Fernandez de Miranda.³¹ Based on the similarities observed in her cognate sets, she concluded that Ixcatec is more closely related to Popoloca than Chocho, although all three languages probably shared a common ancestor. Mazatec is distantly related.

²⁵ Fernandez de Miranda, 1959.

²⁶ Ibid., 1961.

²⁷ Jiménez, 1950.

²⁸ Harvey, 1964.

²⁹ Mechling, 1912.

³⁰ Casanova, 1925.

³¹ Fernandez de Miranda, 1951.

In an attempt to further clarify and quantify her findings concerning Popolocan linguistic history, Fernandez de Miranda³² turned to glottochronology. This procedure reflected a different view of the relationships held by Ixcatec in the Popolocan sub-group. Her analysis of both the 100 and 200 word core vocabulary lists determined that Ixcatec is more closely affiliated with Chocho.

This methodology is based on the assumption that languages have a core vocabulary that is free of cultural influence and changes at constant rate. The proponents of glottochronology suggested that the analysis of the similarities between the lexicon in the core vocabularies of related languages could determine the order and degree of separation between related languages. The validity of using it as a means of sub-grouping, however, has been questioned by many linguists and ultimately rejected. The methodology has been unable to give us any real insight into the historical relationships of the Popolocan languages.

The cause of reconstructing Popolocan was later taken up by Gudschinsky.³³ She determines that Ixcatec, Chocho, and Popoloca all evolved from the same source language. This conclusion is based on her observation of the similarities common in the cognate sets she assembled.

A significant advance in understanding the internal relationships of the Popolocan subgroup is made by Hamp.³⁴ He notes that it is misleading to classify languages solely on the basis of appearances. He rightly proposes that “the only criterion for genetic proximity consists in the recognition of a decision set, whether in number or in structural placement, of shared structural innovations; and these must be innovations of addition

³² Fernandez de Miranda, 1956.

³³ Gudschinsky, 1959.

³⁴ Hamp, 1958 and 1960.

and replacement, rather than by loss.”³⁵ Applying this methodology to the data gathered by Fernandez de Miranda and Gudschinsky, he concludes that the closest relationship among the four languages of the group is shared by Popoloca and Chocho. Ixcatec developed independently of these two.

Hamp also mentions that to this point only phonology has been utilized in the process of reconstructing Popolocan history. I would like to echo his comment that “it would be interesting to see what morphology shows.”³⁶ I expect that once an examination of morphological and grammatical forms is introduced to the problem of Popolocan history, the picture will become much clearer. Robertson shows how effectively a comparison of morphology resolved several difficult questions which had plagued the classification of some Mayan languages.³⁷ There has been a resurgent scholarly interest in Popolocan languages, as demonstrated by the publication of new dictionaries and grammars for Chocho,³⁸ Mazatec³⁹ and Popolocan.⁴⁰ The data is now available to extend the study of morphology to their historical relationships.

According to the 1940 census, 719 of the 994 inhabitants of Ixcatlan were bilingual, speaking both Spanish and Ixcatec.⁴¹ Since that time the number of Ixcatec speakers has declined steadily. In 1970 there were 120 speakers of the native tongue, 8 were said to be monolingual.⁴² By 1990 only 47 bilingual and one monolingual Ixcatec were reported.⁴³ The members of the community blame the instructors of the primary school for the demise of their language. They say that these teachers forbid them to

³⁵ Hamp, 1958:151.

³⁶ Hamp, 1958:153.

³⁷ Robertson, 1980.

³⁸ Mock, 1977.

³⁹ Capen, 1988 and 1996.

⁴⁰ Veerman-Leichsenring, 1991 and Krumholz, 1995.

⁴¹ *Censo*, 1940.

⁴² *Censo*, 1970.

⁴³ *Censo*, 1990.

speak Ixcatec in the school and chastised, or physically punished, those who did. Today there are only a few older citizens, all over 60 years of age, who can speak the language. Ixcatec is seldom heard in public conversation. Sadly, it appears that the language will become extinct in the next few years, with the death of the last remaining speakers.

GOVERNMENT

Ixcatlan is governed by an *ayuntamiento* that is comprised of a *presidente municipal*, one *sindico*, and three *regidores*. These officials are chosen in a communal assembly and serve for a three-year term. Various individuals are nominated for each position. Following an open discussion on the merits of each candidate a vote is taken. The person receiving the most votes will be required to appear on the ballot in the general election, even if reluctant to do so. The runner up will serve as his *suplente* (substitute).

There are no party politics in Ixcatlan, as yet. This fact is noted with pride by the Ixcatec as a sign of the unity within the community. All candidates for political office are presented to the general electorate on the ticket of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). Having been selected to run by the assembly, a individual's election is assured, because there will not be any opposition on the ballot. In the general election, all registered voters may participate. It is at this point that women are allowed to enter into the political process, after the outcome is already certain.

The elected officials have many demands placed on them. They are expected to be available in the municipal offices six days a week to handle the concerns of the community. The time required by the office clearly affects the attention an office holder can give his family and business. Personal resources are also spent in fulfilling his duty. Many who have recently served cite the financial disadvantages of public office.

The assembly is made up of all past and present male Ixcatec who have served the community in any capacity. One gains entry into this governing body by serving on the

local police force or as the secretary to the *ayuntamiento*. Since there is no crime in Ixcatlan to speak of, the main duty of the ten policemen is to run errands for the presiding officers. After serving in this capacity, males are eligible to fill other functions in the community and have a voice in its affairs. All of the members of the assembly may offer their opinions about the matters which are brought to its attention. Special weight, however, is given to the ideas offered those who have taken the burden of various public positions.

There are community committees which oversee the function of each of the local service agencies. These include the church, each of the three schools, the CONASUPO, and the clinic. Members of the committees are selected by the assembly on an annual basis. Their duties include caring for the physical facilities of the agency, providing support for its activities, and serving as a liaison between the members of the community and the agency. Women may also be asked to take part on a committee.

Stewardship of municipal lands is directed by the *Comisión de Bienes Comunales*. The members of this committee serve for a three year term. They are responsible for maintaining the boundaries of the community. They also oversee the leasing of public lands for agricultural purposes. Residents of Ixcatlan petition the committee for grazing rights or permission to plant crops.

RELIGION

The Ixcatec are devoutly Catholics. No protestant influence has been introduced into the community. Ecclesiastically Ixcatlan is a *visita* of the parish at San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca, as it has been since the early colonial period.⁴⁴ Apparently there has never

⁴⁴ Martínez Gracida, 1883, made the unfortunate mistake of placing Ixcatlan in the parish of San Juan Evangelista Huautla. This error is followed by Rincón, 1996b.

been a resident priest in the community. Whenever a member of the clergy is needed to officiate in a religious ceremony, one must be brought in from outside.

The citizens of Ixcatlan are very devoted to their sacred traditions and faithfully maintain the practices of the cult of the saints. In the absence of a priest, prayer services are conducted in the church by a *rezador*. A committee of five men selected by the city council are responsible for opening the church, cleaning the sanctuary, and ringing the bells on schedule. Devotees of the saints see that fresh flowers are placed in the church weekly.

As reflected in the name of the community, the official advocate of Santa María Ixcatlan is the Virgin Mary. The original image of Mary in the church was destroyed in an unfortunate fire, along with the colonial retablo, on April 11, 1966. Her remains now rest in a coffin in the side chapel. A new figure of Mary has since been secured, but currently little public devotion and ceremony is given to her. She still receives flowers on a regular basis and a mass in September. This ceremony always takes place after the eighth of the month, so as not to conflict with the annual feast conducted for La Virgen de la Natividad in nearby Santa María Nativitas. There is no longer a *mayordomo* or association of followers who organize and sponsor a fiesta to honor her in Ixcatlan.

El Señor de las Tres Caídas is the focal point of religious activity among the Ixcatec. This figure of Christ bent under the weight of the cross has effectively become the patron saint of the community. According to local informants, *cofradía* records were destroyed and are no longer available to elucidate the history of his adoration. Official permission to conduct an annual market on his feast day, the fourth Friday of Lent, was granted by state authorities on October 3, 1856.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ *Colección de leyes.*

El Señor arrived in Ixcatlan during the 1840s. The lore of his coming is still told with reverence today. As Cook recounts, the image of El Señor was originally found by a *campesino* in a field near Tilapa in southern Puebla.⁴⁶ At first glance, the discoverer thought that the body he saw was that of a wounded individual. Upon closer inspection, he realized that it was no ordinary man who lay there. He tried to lift the figure of Christ, but was unable to do so. Hastening into town, he sought a priest to come and administer to the image. Even after receiving the blessing from the clergyman, the figure would not be moved. Word of the discovery quickly circulated throughout the region. Many came to see the Christ and attempted to remove it from the spot where he lay, but without success. The news eventually reached Ixcatlan and four men were commissioned to visit the Christ on behalf of the community. After paying their respects, the Ixcatecs were surprised to find that they were able to lift and carry the figure of the Christ. This was taken as a sign that he belonged to them and was willing to go to their village.

The journey up into the mountains of Ixcatlan provided the first of many miracles which are attributed to El Señor de las Tres Caídas. While traveling along the trail which parallels the banks of the Río Salado, the group saw revolutionaries who had been hanged from the telegraph wires by government forces. The passing El Señor revived the suspended corpses of the men and they lived again. Bandits attacked the Ixcatecs as they climbed past the cliffs of the Río Seco, but the image protected the travelers from their advances and the party was unharmed. Three times the weary Ixcatecs who bore the image on their back fell to the ground as they ascended the trail, but El Señor was unscathed. As he approached Ixcatlan, it is said that all the trees bowed and shed their leaves to carpet the path in his honor.

⁴⁶ Cook, 1958.

The miraculous powers of El Señor de las Tres Caídas are well known by the inhabitants of the region. Pilgrims come from as far as Mexico City to seek his blessing in their individual lives. The image is also regarded as the protector of Ixcatlan. One incident related to me illustrates his role in this regard. It occurred during the Mexican Revolution. On February 29, 1920 Carranzista forces under the command of Candelario Moreno attacked Ixcatlan, whose inhabitants supported the Zapatista movement. As the followers of Carranza descended on the village, the Ixcatecs scattered and sought refuge in the hills. The invaders looted the vacant homes, taking everything that was left behind. Then they began to set fire to the town. As the fires in the first dwellings grew, rain fell from the cloudless sky to quench the flames. The Carranzistas retreated from the valley in great haste with their plunder. They took from the village all the personal belongings and livestock they could manage, but the town was spared. The Ixcatec give all the credit for their salvation on this occasion to El Señor.

El Señor de las Tres Caídas is regarded by many of the Ixcatec faithful as a living being. Former members of the *cofradía* who were responsible for his care have told me that blood has been seen on his undergarments when his vestments were changed. It is also said that his beard periodically needs to be trimmed, because it still grows. On one occasion some cracks were detected in the image. A craftsman was called to look at the problem and offer his opinion on how repairs might be made. It was discovered that the cracks had disappeared and his services were no longer needed. The blemishes had healed themselves.

The image of El Señor is venerated on three occasions annually. The fourth Friday of Lent, *Cuarto Viernes*, is considered the main feast of El Señor and is the largest of the celebrations. This event was once the responsibility of the *cofradía* in his honor. A *mayordomo* was selected by the village authorities to direct the activities. This festival

has grown in popularity and is now attended by large throngs of participants. It has become too expensive for one individual to manage. The proceedings are now directed by a committee appointed by the *ayuntamiento*. The various events are supported with public funds and fees charged to the merchants who set up their businesses in the plaza beside the church.

During *Cuarto Viernes* the usually quiet streets of Ixcatlan are filled with thousands of visitors. Many have family ties to the community and return to visit with relatives for this important occasion. Some come from neighboring towns to worship El Señor and seek his favor. Still others come to sell food, refreshment, and assorted dry goods to those who have gathered in Ixcatlan. This is the only time of the year that an organized market is set up in town. (Figure 12) Because there is no hotel or restaurant in Ixcatlan, all the outside visitors must rely on family, friends, or the streets for the necessities of life. Local homes are filled with lodgers, but they cannot meet the demand. Many are forced to sleep in their vehicles or camp in the fields. The resulting scene is a marked contrast to the normal peaceful demeanor of Ixcatlan. The capacity of the community is severely tested.

To commemorate the miraculous arrival of El Señor to Ixcatlan, some visitors still chose to make the pilgrimage on foot from Tecomavaca along the same route he followed. Because the trip is an arduous climb through the mountains during one the hottest times of the year, the pilgrims often travel at night. The route is marked by three small crosses in the locations where tradition says El Señor took his three falls. Numerous other crosses have been erected along the way by pilgrims over the years. Enterprising vendors set up stands to sell food and drink to the travelers.

The actual celebration of *Cuarto Viernes* begins with the first mass which is offered on the Friday of the preceding week. Then, beginning the following Monday,

masses are offered over the entire week at the request of *hermandades* and individuals that wish to sponsor them. A priest from outside the parish is usually contracted to conduct the ceremonies. During the festivities of 1997, *hermandades* from 38 different localities paid for masses.

Each day of the *fiesta* begins before sunrise with fireworks and the local band playing *Las mañanitas* for El Señor. A full schedule of masses follows from sunrise to sunset. In the late night hours, hooded and barefoot penitents fulfill their promises by carrying large wooden crosses along the ritual route around the town. Assisted by lay clergy, they pause at each of the stations of the cross to recite the requisite prayers. These processions take several hours to complete.

Besides the religious services, a basketball tournament is also held, primarily for the youth. Teams from Ixcatlan and the neighboring communities in the Mixteca Alta compete for prizes. The evening hours are filled with fireworks and dances organized by the local committee to entertain the many guests. The committee which oversees the event has purposely tried to maintain a religious focus to the festival. They have rejected the efforts of some to introduce boxing tournaments and rodeos into the program. It is thought that these types of activities detract from their purpose, distract the participants, and secularize the occasion.

A procession, which is conducted on the afternoon of *Cuarto Viernes*, is the climax of the celebration. Mary is the first to leave the church. She is carried on the shoulders of female attendants. Leaving the atrium gate, she and her entourage turn left and head slowly west. El Señor is removed from his place in the church, still protected in a glass enclosure, and carried through the town (Figures 13 and 14). He is accompanied by flowers, candles, incense, and sky rockets along the route. His ritual path leaves the church yard and continues straight up the hill, past the plaza and town hall, to the upper

street. He then turns west until he reaches the last cross street at the far edge of town. There the procession heads south to meet the Virgin. After the two images are united, Mary follows El Señor back to the church along the same path she just traveled.

Once El Señor has returned to his place behind the altar, a mass exodus ensues. Almost immediately the visitors and vendors pack up their belongings and leave town. A steady stream of traffic clogs the narrow roads out of valley well into the night. By morning the plaza is once again vacant, except for the refuse which remains. As the efforts to clean up begin on Saturday morning, the farewell mass is said for El Señor, at the expense of the festival committee.

El Señor is once again the center of attention one week later, during the week which precedes Easter. Holy Week observances begin on Palm Sunday. A figure known as San Ramón is taken from the church in a procession along the upper road to the little chapel on the northwest corner of town (Figure 15). This saint bears a striking resemblance to a Christ figure seated on a donkey. He will remain in the hermitage until he is returned to the church via the bottom street on Wednesday. The following day, the Ixcatec gather in the atrium of the church to reenact the Last Supper.

A procession to commemorate the crucifixion of Christ is held on Good Friday. El Señor is taken from his sanctuary and carried along the same route that he followed on *Cuarto Viernes*. After he departs, the Virgin of Sorrows proceeds west along the bottom street (Figure 16). The figures of Christ and Mary meet at the far edge of town and then return to the church.

The final event of Holy Week is a *misa de gloria*. This mass is conducted late on Saturday night to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. The church and the town are quiet

on Sunday. There is no longer a procession like the one Cook witnessed on Easter Sunday during one of his visits to Ixcatlan.⁴⁷

The other events which recognize El Señor de las Tres Caídas are the sole responsibility of a *mayordomo*. At one time this position was appointed by the city council, but today it is filled by volunteers. The *mayordomo* serves for the term of one year, which begins in January. He must provide fresh flowers for the saint each Saturday. These flowers are a considerable expense during the normal growing season. In the winter months, when flowers are in short supply, the cost is likely to double. The *mayordomo* also pays for the masses which are said for El Señor on the *octava* of *Cuarto Viernes*, which is Good Friday. He also sponsors a mass on May 7, the date of the coronation of El Señor. Likewise, the *mayordomo* arranges for the ritual and prayers which are offered on May 14, the *octava* of the coronation.

Several other saints are worshiped in some form or another during the year. The Day of the Holy Cross is celebrated on May 3. A procession climbs the hill above the village where a cross is permanently positioned. The *Santísimo Custodia* is venerated with a mass on May 8. During the entire month of June the *Corazón de Jesús* is revered. Sky rockets are discharged every morning before sunrise and a prayer service is held. Some time during the period a mass will be offered for the image. In the past there have been as many as fifty associates organized for this purpose; during 1997 there were only seven. The image of the *Dulce Nombre de María* is honored on September 12. After a mass, sponsored by the *mayordomo*, the Virgin has a procession through town.

In Ixcatlan, as in the rest of Mexico, the Day of the Dead or *Todos Santos* is celebrated on November 1 and 2. Preparations for this event begin well in advance with the weaving of colorful baskets, dipping candles, and baking bread. Elaborate altars,

⁴⁷ Cook, 1958.

decorated with flowers, food, and candles, are erected in every home. On the morning of November 1, families share baskets of food with their relatives and members of their ritual kinship group. Deceased children are honored on this day. The Ixcatec gather in the cemetery that afternoon, summoned by the ringing of the church bell. Candles and flowers are usually placed at the graves. (Figures 17 and 18) As evening approaches, everyone returns home. No one spends the night in the cemetery. Two trips to the cemetery are made the following day to pay respects to the adult dead, one in the morning and another in the afternoon.

December is a very active month for the Ixcatec. Celebrations begin on December 12 with prayers to the Virgin of Guadalupe. The Posadas are held from the December 15 through 23. Images of Joseph and Mary are included in the festivities and spend the night in different homes throughout the period. They return to the church on the 24th as the birth of the Christ child is commemorated. Over the next eight days the *mayordomo*, together with the matrons and patrons, will offer mass, candles, and flowers to the newborn. El Señor de las Tres Caídas circles town in procession at midnight on December 31. The Christmas activities end on New Year's Day with a final mass and rodeo hosted by the responsible parties.

PALM WEAVING

Palm weaving is still very important to the lives of the great majority of the residents of Ixcatlan and is the only local industry. (Figures 19 and 20) The Ixcatec have been practicing the craft for many centuries. The *relaciones geograficas* of 1579 and 1778 both mention palm weaving as the sole economic activity of the community.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ JGI XXIV-7 and Esparza, 1994.

There is good reason to believe that the Ixcatec have been weaving palm since the prehispanic period.⁴⁹

Cook analyzed the utilization of palm and its economic impact on the community.⁵⁰ He provides an excellent description of the labor involved in producing palm hats. The process has not changed. It includes collecting, drying, and stripping the palm fronds before any weaving can take place. The work is hard and poorly paid, but weaving is often the only work available to the Ixcatec and it sustains them. Even young children are involved in this economic activity.

During the day individuals weave in between other chores around the house or as they watch over animals in the fields. Families and friends gather to talk and weave in the leisure hours of the evening. Those that have televisions will keep busy processing palm while they watch their favorite programs. Town meetings are even conducted with the soft sounds of palm being platted in the background.

Much of the weaving process takes place in underground caves that are cut into the bedrock. These structures keep the palm moist and pliable for working. They also offer a cool shady location to escape the heat of the afternoon. Most family compounds have a cave. Many are wired with electricity and lit at night.

The Ixcatec are skilled weavers and can make a variety of products with palm. They regularly prepare mats (*petates*) and colorfully decorated baskets for home use, but there is little demand for these items commercially and they are not exported. Palm hats are constructed and sold to the local merchants or exchanged for other goods. These hats are taken to Tehuacan for shaping and final processing before entering the national market system. It is not unusual for a humble family to collect all the hats woven in the

⁴⁹ Velasco Rodriguez, 1994.

⁵⁰ Cook, 1958.

household during the day and take them in the evening to secure ingredients for the evening meal or maize for the next day's tortillas. Should there not be enough hats ready at any time to make a needed purchase, a flurry of weaving will be undertaken until an adequate amount of funds is secured.

The presence of palm in the natural surroundings of the community is considered to be a blessing. In fact, one myth is still told in Ixcatlan of how palm was first introduced. There once was a great lord named Samson who lived along the banks of the Río Xuquila, near the place that is called La Huerta today. He made a bet with his wife as to who could generate the most wealth for their kingdom. The winner of this wager would have the power to control the rains. One night they both set out to seek their fortune by tunneling underground. Samson dug all night, according to their agreement, and found himself high in the mountains of Ixcatlan at daybreak. A large cavern on the slopes of the Cañada Capulín is said to be where he exited the earth. This opening is believed to connect directly to a cave just above the Río Xuquila where Samson began his subterranean journey. Before returning home, Samson planted some dates throughout the landscape. Their seeds germinated to produce the palm trees that appear across Ixcatlan and the Mixteca Alta. Meanwhile, Samson's wife excavated a passage that led east into the high peaks of the Mazateca. At dawn she planted coffee beans. Her crop thrived and produced a great harvest. Samson conceded victory to his wife and granted her control of the rain. She directs the supply of water to her coffee plantations. For this reason precipitation falls abundantly in the Mazateca, but is scarce in Ixcatlan.

The short palm tree is also given credit for protecting the village during the Mexican Revolution. The story is told that on one occasion the Carranzista forces, which operated out the lowlands to the north, attempted to invade Ixcatlan by ascending the Río Seco. As they approached the area known as El Palmar, the trunks of the palms, which

give this location its name, were silhouetted against the sun. The trees appeared as armed sentinels ready to fight. Unwilling to attack such a well-defended position, the invaders retreated back down out of the mountains without firing a shot.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *municipio* of Ixcatlan contains 201.58 square miles. This territory offers landscapes that are varied and diverse. High mountain peaks covered with oak and cedar forests surround the community. *Tierra caliente* with its sparse thorny brush dominates the farthest margins of Ixcatec territory. In between there is a transition zone filled with steep canyons and rugged hills. The micro-environments and their resources are just as distinct and diversified.

The first thing that one notices upon arriving in the valley of Ixcatlan is the lack of heavy erosion that is plainly evident in the Coixtlahuaca Basin and the Nochixtlan Valley. While the immediate surroundings of the village are well worn from centuries of use, they remain intact. Cultivation is only recently becoming mechanized. The community acquired a John Deere tractor in 1996. Its use is limited by the terrain and the ability to pay.

Cook was concerned that the woodlands of Ixcatlan were in serious danger of being depleted. He considered the forests to be in a poor state. Numerous old trees were dying and there were few young trees to take their place. Overgrazing by domestic animals, deforestation for agriculture, and the spread of epiphytes were believed to be the cause of the situation.⁵¹

Fortunately, the forested areas of Ixcatlan have survived the intervening years. Ixcatlan is a free range *municipio*. Animals are allowed access to pasturelands in the mountains without any restriction. Limited numbers of horses and cattle do graze in the

⁵¹ Cook, 1958.

uplands, but not in significant numbers to do much harm. Goats are much more numerous. The largest herds however are pastured in the canyons on the far side of the ridge. The Ixcatec believe that forage there fattens the animals faster. These herds are only grazed in the woodlands when no other suitable location is available. In my fifteen years experience within the community I have not witnessed any clearing of the forest for cultivation. Trees are seldom cut for any reason. Dead and dry timber is preferred for firewood. Despite Cook's pessimism the woodlands of Ixcatlan continue to offer an extraordinary environment to the Ixcatec.

Water resources are not abundant in Ixcatlan. There are several springs in the community that are used to supply domestic needs. One well-maintained spring on the western edge of the urban area is the origin of the Río Sabino that flows through the valley. The small stream only runs a hundred meters before the water disappears into the gravel and rocks of the river bed. From this point the course of the Río Sabino is usually dry, except following a heavy rain. Another spring east of the village replenishes the flow and creates a permanent stream. Water from this source is pumped up into town and stored in a large tank for local use. Every morning an individual is responsible for starting the diesel engine that powers the pump to fill the tank.

From the lower spring the Río Sabino proceeds east through the valley until it unites with the Río Guautla at San Pedro Nodón. The union of the two rivers produces an ample flow of water that drops quickly into a steep canyon. It is joined by the Río Zapato below Nodón. At this point the name of the waterway changes to become the Río Vela. It descends from the Mixteca Alta and joins the Río Grande far below.

Cook speculated that the remainder of the landscape within the *municipio* of Ixcatlan was void of any water.⁵² The region was uninhabitable because of the lack of

⁵² Cook, 1958.

water. However, in the mountains north of the community, there are many water features that are important to the area. In the meadows of El Cumbre there is a small lake that collects runoff from the highlands (Figure 21). Another lake known as Laguna Primera is located a short distance to the west. Other small depressions collect runoff in the vicinity of Gandudo. These reservoirs provide drinking water for the variety of livestock that pasture in the mountains.

Permanent streams are also found in the region north of the mountains. Water emerging from springs on the western slope of Gandudo flows through the Cañada Colorada. Near Mal Paso water seeps through the dramatic folds in the rock to form the Río Santiago (Figure 22). It meanders through a broad, deep canyon before joining the Río Seco. Springs near Culebrón generate the Río Carpintero, another tributary of the Río Seco. Further down the slopes along the road to Tecomavaca, another spring gives birth to the Río Frio which eventually runs into the Carpintero. Many of the canyons and *barrancas* that directly drain the uplands run with water. Historically these streams could have supported a number of *estancias* or *ranchos*. More recently they are used to water livestock and serve the needs of the *palenques* that produce mescal.

The climate within the *municipio* of Ixcatlan varies greatly. Given the altitude of the village itself, the evenings and early mornings there are usually cool, regardless of the season. When the sun sets, a jacket or sweater is required. The skies are clear and cloudless during the spring. At this time of the year, days can be quite warm, uncomfortably so.

With the beginning of the rainy season in June, the weather becomes overcast and cooler. Clouds hang on the mountaintops and fog forms in the valleys. Rain often comes in the form of a light mist that makes everything damp. These conditions can last for days without producing much measurable precipitation.

Annual rainfall totals vary greatly. In an average year 680 millimeters of precipitation is received in the area.⁵³ Dry years may have as little as 200 millimeters.⁵⁴ Occasionally, large thunderstorms develop and drop copious amounts of rain in a short period of time. The heaviest precipitation comes from the influence of tropical storms and hurricanes. These events can move into the Ixcatlan area from either the Pacific Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico. When the remnants of one of these storms stall over the region, excessive amounts of rain fall for an extended period of time. Arroyos and streams fill with torrents of muddy water. These storms serve to replenish ground water supplies, rejuvenate springs and refill the reservoirs and depressions. They are also responsible for a great deal of the erosion and destruction in the landscape. It is not uncommon for a lightning strike to ignite a fire in the woodlands that will burn for days, or even weeks, before it is extinguished.

The end of the rainy season in August means a return to warm and dry conditions. By November the temperatures are significantly cooler and the thermometer continues to drop as the year progresses. Frost can form on the coldest of winter nights. Frozen rain or sleet will fall on rare occasions. Winter is short, however, and the weather is already improving by February.

The northern half of the municipality offers a sharp contrast to the environs around Ixcatlan. The lower altitudes between the mountains and the Río Xuquila are part of the *tierra caliente* of the southern Tehuacan Valley. The climate here is generally hot and arid. It is a frost free zone that allows for continuous agricultural production and the cultivation of tropical fruits.

⁵³ Rincón, 1999.

⁵⁴ Cook, 1958.

Cook hypothesized that a climatological change in the recent history of Ixcatlan has been responsible for a modification of the local environment.⁵⁵ He based his argument on the fact that the neighboring community of San Miguel Guautla was paying tribute with cotton mantas in 1553. He suggested that the Mixtecs must have also been growing the raw cotton that they used to produce the fabric. Cook concluded that if Guautla could produce cotton, it could also be cultivated in Ixcatlan. Cotton requires conditions that are warmer and moister than the current environment of the region offers. Therefore, a significant change must have taken place since the early colonial period.

In support of this hypothesis Cook offers the text of the 1778 *relación geográfica* prepared by the curate of Apoala.⁵⁶ In a section of that document which he believed to be a description of Santa María Ixcatlan, there is mention of chicozapotes, sugar cane, papayas and anonas growing in the region. These plants are semitropical and also require warmer temperatures and more abundant rainfall than is currently provided by the natural conditions of Ixcatlan. They are not cultivated by the Ixcatec today. Cook concluded that a lowering of the average temperature and decrease in the annual precipitation of the region must have been responsible for the failure of these crops to survive in the region. He further suggested that because of this “profound alteration in the physical environment during the past two hundred years, the inhabitants have been driven more and more towards an arid land economy: from diversified agriculture to corn alone, from corn to manual industry in the form of hat manufacture. Even that has been forced upon them by the overwhelming abundance of the palmetto, itself a plant of arid situations.”⁵⁷

There are, however, serious flaws in Cook’s hypothesis. Guautla was indeed required to provide cotton textiles as tribute during the early colonial period. This does

⁵⁵ Cook, 1958.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Cook, 1958: 18.

not mean, however, that the natives of Guautla grew the cotton themselves. Colonial documents relate that cotton was cultivated primarily in the warmer regions below 1,000 meters in altitude. Nevertheless, highland communities imported the raw materials they needed from the lower elevations to prepare the textiles demanded as tribute.⁵⁸ Guautla no doubt did the same. In 1580 the inhabitants of the community made cotton textiles as part of the tribute paid to the crown, according to their *relación geográfica*.⁵⁹ It is noted in that document that they did not gather any cotton; but brought it from the coast, some thirty leagues away.

The *tasación* of 1553 cited by Cook also indicates that Guautla was required to pay two *cargas* of cacao as part of their tribute.⁶⁰ It would be unthinkable to apply his logic and assume that the Guautechos were also cultivating this product in the Mixteca Alta. Cacao is a purely tropical cultigen and only does well in hot, moist environments, usually below 300 meters.⁶¹ Its range of production is much more limited than that of cotton. It is very certain that Guautla sought the cacao they offered in tribute from outside the local area, just as they did the cotton.

The other evidence to which Cook referred in support of his hypothesis of climate change came from the corpus of *relaciones geográficas* from the eighteenth century. However, the passage he cited did not pertain to Santa María Ixcatlan, but rather to Santa María Texcatitlan, a community located in a much more temperate ecological zone on the western slopes above the Río Apoala.⁶² The tropical plants listed in the *relación* of 1778 continue to flourish in the warmer conditions there. Ixcatlan was never part of the parish of Apoala and would not have been included in that document. A very brief description

⁵⁸ Berdan, 1987.

⁵⁹ Acuña, 1992.

⁶⁰ González de Cossío, 1952.

⁶¹ Pursglove, 1968 and Alvim, 1977.

⁶² Esparza, 1994.

of Ixcatlan in 1778 was provided by the priest of Coixtlahuaca, which administered to Ixcatlan.⁶³ It mentions only the presence of oaks and palms in the local forests makes no reference to the cultivation of tropical fruits.

There is no basis in the historical record to deduce that a significant modification has occurred in the natural environment of Ixcatlan, the Mixteca Alta, or northern Oaxaca. An examination of the archaeological floral and faunal remains nearby in the Tehuacan Valley do not reflect any evidence of a climatic change during the last eight to ten millennium. In fact, they show that the environment of the region has remained very stable over this period of time.⁶⁴

In rejecting the idea that a dramatic climate change has affected the local ecology, I do not dismiss the possibility that cotton may have once been cultivated in Ixcatlan. The very name of the community means “place of cotton,” in Nahuatl. Cotton most certainly could have been cultivated along the banks of the Río Xuquila or the Río Salado in the northern limits of the municipio. This region offers the warmer conditions and ample water supply which are required to successfully raise cotton.

The adjoining portions of the Tehuacan Valley have a long and well documented presence of cotton. The earliest cotton remains, two bolls of *gossypium hirsutum* L. from Coxcatlan Cave, date to 5500 BC.⁶⁵ The majority of the cotton artifacts from Tehuacan Valley come from the Palo Blanco (200 BC to AD 700) and Venta Salada (700 to 1540 AD) horizons.⁶⁶ It is during these periods that spindle whorls appear in the stratigraphic record.⁶⁷ There is also a greater frequency of artifacts relating to production of cotton thread, such as spindle whorls and spinning bowls, in the Epiclassic and Postclassic sites

⁶³ Esparza, 1994.

⁶⁴ Byers, 1967

⁶⁵ Stephens, 1967 and Smith and MacNeish, 1964.

⁶⁶ Smith, 1967.

⁶⁷ MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery, 1970.

of Morelos. A growing demand for cotton products is seen in Central Mexico during this time.⁶⁸ The increased interest in cotton throughout the region perhaps led to the cultivation of cotton in Ixcatlan.

⁶⁸ Smith and Hirth, 1988.

Chapter 2: Archaeology and Prehistory

There has been no previous archaeological reconnaissance or excavation within the municipio of Ixcatlan. Nothing is known about the settlement pattern, material culture or ceramic sequence of its ancient inhabitants. The community, however, is surrounded by areas that have received significant attention by archaeologists. Extensive surveys and excavations have been conducted in the Tehuacan Valley to the north, the Cuicatlan Cañada on the east, and the Mixteca Alta on Ixcatlan's southern boundary. In an effort to place Ixcatlan in this rich archaeological context, I would like to briefly examine the cultural sequence of these neighboring regions.

TEHUACAN VALLEY

The Tehuacan valley was the subject of an extensive archaeological survey and interdisciplinary study conducted from 1960 to 1965. The project documented 457 sites along the valley of the Río Salado. The area investigated extended from Tlacotepec, Puebla on the north to Tecomavaca, Oaxaca on the south. These sites spanned a long sequence of human occupation in this arid, desert environment.⁶⁹

The earliest period of occupation in the Tehuacan Valley, the Ajuereado Phase (10,000-6700 B.C.) is known through open camp sites, as well as caves at El Riego and Coxcatlan. Their inhabitants were hunters and gathers who moved seasonally through the area. They utilized the available faunal resources, but primarily ate meat. Material culture was limited mainly to stone tools.⁷⁰

In the succeeding El Riego Phase (7000 to 5000 B.C.) it is postulated that the small migrating bands camped together in the summer rainy season. They planted crops

⁶⁹ Byers, 1967b.

⁷⁰ Byers, 1972 and MacNeish, 1970.

in the damp valley bottoms, growing beans, squash and amaranth to supplement their diets. A new grinding stone industry developed, as did the fabrication of mats, baskets and nets.

The Coxcatlan Phase (5000 – 3400 B.C.) saw the introduction of a wider variety of plants brought into cultivation, including maize. It is thought that the seasonal bands were larger and campsites were utilized for more than one season.

By the Abejas Phase (3400 – 2300 B.C.) horticulture had become more significant. It is estimated that agricultural products had reached twenty-five percent of dietary consumption. Small hamlets of pithouses lining stream terraces reflect a distinct change in settlement pattern. The habitations may have served as permanent bases for the groups that continued to move with the seasons to collect wild plants and hunt game.

The Purron Phase (2300 – 1500 B. C.) is the least understood period in the sequence. It is known from only two cave occupations. Apparently, an increase in agricultural production now provided a surplus that sustained the population over a greater period of time. Crude ceramics were introduced into the material culture.

Subsistence agriculture was developed in the Ajalpan Phase (1500 – 900 B.C.) with cultigens accounting for forty percent of the diet. Ceramics were more diverse and important. Ten pottery types were produced and clay figurines were developed. Spindle whorls were used to prepare cotton string and cloth was woven on a loom. The linear hamlets were occupied year round and their inhabitants depended on agriculture.

The Santa María Phase (900 – 150 B.C.) was marked by significant changes in the life of the local population. Villages were formed by groups of houses associated with a central plaza. Many structures were faced with stone. The settlements were located in river bottoms and water resources were used to irrigate crops.

Palo Blanco sites (150 B.C. – 700 A.D.) are much more numerous than Santa María settlements. There was a great deal of variation in size and location. Ceramics from the period include gray wares that appear to imitate types from Monte Alban. Larger towns had pyramids built around central plazas, with ballcourts and residential areas. Many were situated on hilltops.

In the Venta Salada Phase (700 – 1520 A.D.) the Tehuacan valley was ruled by four large cacicazgos. An elite class dominated a highly structured society in these Post-Classic city-states. Considerable influence from Mixtec-Puebla and Cholula styles appear in the ceramic collections. Many inhabited locations, both large and small, have defensive fortifications.

The discovery of an irrigation system along the Río Xuquila by the Tehuacan survey is of particular interest to the discussion concerning the archaeology of Ixcatlan (Figure 23). Two parallel aqueducts, or canals, were found on the rocky slopes north of the Río Xuquila.⁷¹ Their construction dates from the Palo Blanco Phase and the subsequent Venta Salada Phase. The delivery system was able to direct the ample flow of water into the small pockets of cultivatable ground along the river. The canals enabled the utilization of these limited farmlands, which would not have been possible without irrigation. Some of these fields are still being tilled and planted by individuals from nearby San Ignacio Mejia.

The remains of the upper canal have survived in better condition and illustrate how impressive the irrigation system may have been. It is at least 6 kilometers in length and crosses several intermittent tributaries that flow into the Río Xuquila. William Doolittle notes:

⁷¹ Woodbury and Neely, 1972.

There is no evidence that masonry walls were constructed across the tributaries to support the canal. Accordingly, some type of suspended aqueduct must have been used, such that the water could flow under it. The construction of a suspended structure was indeed a significant achievement, however rudimentary it may have been.⁷²

He suggests that hollowed out logs supported by a wooden trestle may have been employed. Such features are still used today and are postulated at prehispanic sites elsewhere in Oaxaca.

Associated with this water system are agricultural terraces and several habitations. During late Palo Blanco times there were at least seven small settlements along the slopes above the Río Xuquila.⁷³ Three Venta Salada sites along the river may have been associated with a large fortified hilltop town on the ridge above. This complex of archaeological sites lies just across the river from lands held by Santa María Ixcatlan. No survey was conducted by the Tehuacan project south of the river. It is very likely that similar remains could be found in Ixcatec territory.

CUICATLAN CAÑADA

The Cuicatlan Cañada is a deep canyon that connects the Tehuacan Valley with the Valley of Oaxaca. The Río Grande and its tributaries run north, down from the highlands, and join the Río Salado near San Juan Quiotepec. The two rivers meet to form the Río Santo Domingo. It turns east and cuts through the Sierra Madre Occidental, eventually becoming the Río Papoloapan which drains into the Gulf of Mexico in southern Veracruz.

Like the Tehuacan Valley, the climate of the Cañada is hot and dry. The average annual temperature is 25°C, with extremes between 43°C and 6°C recorded. Rainfall amounts average less than 300 cm. per year, too little for successful dry farming.

⁷² Doolittle, 1990.

⁷³ Woodbury and Neely, 1972.

However, major rain events can sometimes bring large amounts of precipitation quickly, causing the river to flood, often with disastrous results.⁷⁴

The vegetation of the region is comprised of deciduous, thorny trees, that drop their leaves during the heat of the dry season. Among these are palo verde, mesquite and quebracho. These are accompanied in the landscape by many varieties of cacti, including the prickly pear (nopal), pitchoyo, and organ cactus.

Because of the warm climate, tropical fruits abound. Many are commercially produced. The cash crops grown in the Cañada include zapote, papaya, melons, chicozotes, mangos, citrus fruit, and sugar cane. Corn, beans, and squash are also raised. Irrigation is essential to the process, and the supply of water is virtually unlimited. Cultivated fields are found along the four major alluvial fans on the valley floor. These fans are found near the present communities of Quiotepec, Cuicatlan, El Chilar, and Domingullo. Elsewhere, “the terrain is rough, non-irrigatable, and uninhabitable,”⁷⁵ but the alluvial soils of the Cañada can be very productive where water is available.

The Cañada has also been the focus of considerable archaeological research, including survey and excavation. The archaeological sequence, however, is not nearly as long as that seen in the Tehuacan Valley. Four major phases of occupation are recognized in the region.⁷⁶ The earliest sites in the Cañada appear in the Perdido Phase (650-300 B.C.). There are twelve inhabited locations along the Río Grande at this time period. All are found on the alluvial terraces of lower piedmont spurs that overlook fertile sections of land adjacent to the river.

Perdido Phase sites already show signs of social hierarchy and status differentiation. Tombs and trade goods are found in association with higher ranked

⁷⁴ Hopkins, 1984.

⁷⁵ Hunt and Hunt, 1974.

⁷⁶ Redmond, 1983 and Spencer and Redmond, 1997.

households and individuals. The largest of the communities from this period, El Mirador near Cuicatlan and the Hacienda Tecomaxtlahuaca at El Chilar, were located on the two central alluvial fans. Each had an area over eight hectares. Both of these sites contain large central plazas and the remains of pyramid structures as high as four meters. In contrast, Quiotepec, at the confluence of the Río Grande and the Río Salado was much smaller and only covered about two hectares during this period. The same can be said of La Coyotera on the Domingullo alluvial fan. This settlement had multiple compounds that contained residences, storehouses and ceremonial platforms. No remnants of irrigation systems have been linked to Perdido Phase settlements. It is assumed that the inhabitants used simpler techniques to divert water into their fields.

The Early Classic period in the Cuicatlan Cañada, begins with the Lomas Phase (300 B.C. - 200 A.D.). All Perdido sites were abandoned and new settlements were founded. Excavations at La Coyotera revealed that the site was burned and destroyed about 200 or 150 B.C.

Lomas Phase sites reflect a fundamental change in community organization. The large compounds that were the basic unit of residence in the Perdido Phase are replaced by small household clusters. Of the fourteen Lomas Phase sites found on the alluvial fans of Cuicatlan, El Chilar, and Domingullo, none is larger than five hectares in size. The exception to the trend towards smaller sites is Quiotepec. At this natural pass along the route north into the Tehuacan Valley, seven new sites were occupied. A fortress that protected two monumental mound groups, a ballcourt, and at least thirty residences was built atop the highest hill, just west of the river. Two other large settlements straddle the river banks at Paso de Quiotepec and Campo del Panteón.

Architecture and artifacts from the Lomas Phase suggest a strong military presence. Monte Alban II ceramic types found in the stratigraphic sequence have been

interpreted by Elsa Redmond as evidence of Zapotec conquest and occupation.⁷⁷ This conclusion is supported by the appearance of the hieroglyphic toponym for Cuicatlan on Building V at Monte Alban. Quiotepec is thought to be a frontier outpost and represent the northern-most expansion of Zapotec influence. The Cañada was transformed from an autonomous region to a tributary province of an expanding Monte Alban state at this time.

Elaborate irrigation structures were also found in association with Lomas Phase sites. Canals and aqueducts were constructed and utilized to bring water down the nearby arroyos. This effort would have greatly increased the production of food either to support a growing population or to be offered as tribute.

One of the major developments of the Trujano Phase (200 – 1000 A.D.) is believed to be the withdrawal of the Zapotec from the Cañada. At this time, the site of Quiotepec is greatly reduced in size and appears to have lost its importance. The other fourteen settlements expanded in size. Most of the population in the Cañada was concentrated in the Cuicatlan area, near the center of the canyon. Each of the four alluvial fans has one major settlement. These are believed to be the *cabecera* of a separate polity or *cacicazgo*. Each location has plazas, ballcourts, and smaller settlements nearby.

During the Iglesia Vieja Phase (1,000 – 1,220 A.D.), the number of sites in the Cañada expands to 79, a significant increase from the Trujano Phase. The large site on the Cuicatlan fan, which gives its name to this occupational phase, extends over nearly 48 hectares on the hilltop above the present-day town. There were an estimated 210 to 230 households. The arrangement of pyramids and plazas reflect three levels of complex ceremonial architecture.

⁷⁷ Redmond, 1983.

MIXTECA ALTA

The Mixteca Alta is a large expanse of high mountains and intervening valleys in western Oaxaca, just south of Santa María Ixcatlan. Much of this landscape rises from 1,500 to 3,000 meters above sea level. The diverse topography serves to isolate the population and creates a variety of micro-environments. The climate can vary from cold and damp to hot and dry, depending on altitude. The highest elevations contain forests with pine, oak, and cedar. Various species of agave and cactus also abound. Many valleys are now treeless and their slopes heavily eroded. For the most part archaeological reconnaissance has been limited to the valleys of Nochixtlan and Tamazulapan.⁷⁸

Little is known about the earliest archaic occupations in the region. Very few sites belonging to these hunters, gatherers and proto-agriculturalists have been detected. It is expected that the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash, as well as those other indicators of farming life, were introduced from outside the Mixteca Alta between 3000 and 1500 B.C.

At that time, the first traces of Mixtec settlements begin to appear. Yucuita and Coyotepec are representative of early Cruz Phase (1,500 – 750 B.C.) sites in the Nochixtlan Valley. Others are known from the neighboring valley of Tamazulapan. These small settlements are marked by rectangular structures with foundations and walls constructed of stone or adobe bricks. They tend to be situated along stream beds and near fertile alluvial bottomlands. In the late Cruz Phase (750 – 200 B.C.) that followed, occupations remained small but were more numerous. Many sites across the Nochixtlan valley are similar in size, organization and material culture. One exception is Etlatongo where an earthen platform 200 meters wide and ten meters high was constructed at the confluence of two rivers.

⁷⁸ Spores, 1984 and Byland, 1980.

Ramos Phase (200 B.C. – 300 A.D.) occupations of the Early Classic reflect a move towards urbanization. Settlements become more complex and more numerous. Their variation in size demonstrates that social and political hierarchies had developed, a major transformation in Mixtec culture. Yucuita becomes the major urban center of this period. Other important sites are Monte Negro, Huamelulpan, and Diquiyu. The presence of exotic imported goods in the material culture also indicates expanding relations with cultures outside of the Mixteca Alta. Monte Alban ceramics from the Valley of Oaxaca appear, as do such things as shells and cotton from coastal regions.

During the Flores Phase (300 – 1,000 A.D.) social differentiation in the Mixteca Alta is fully developed. Late Classic settlements vary greatly in their size and complexity. The most significant sites of the period are found at Yucuñudahui, Cerro Jasmin and Etlatongo. These communities had extensive residential areas and ceremonial complexes with plazas, temple pyramids and ballcourts. The settlement pattern favored high ridge crests and piedmont spurs. These locations were selected for their defensibility. They also offered unlimited visibility and control of major mountain passes. Mixtec population during the Flores Phase was double that of the Ramos Phase. Hillside terracing was introduced into the agricultural practices of the region, perhaps to improve productivity for the growing number of inhabitants.

The Ñuiñe culture was one important regional variation that developed at this time. Sites associated with this culture are generally found in the Mixteca Baja. Cerro de las Minas, on a hilltop overlooking Huajuapán de León is a major site associated with Ñuiñe culture. The Ñuiñe developed a writing system that was closely related to and influenced by the Zapotec. Hieroglyphic texts are found carved in stone throughout the Mixteca Baja in such locations as Tequixtepec, Miltepec, and Chazumba.⁷⁹ Ñuiñe style

⁷⁹ Moser, 1977.

pictographs also appear outside the region. Examples are found at El Puente del Rosario in Tepelmeme⁸⁰ and at a tomb recently discovered in Jocoticpac.⁸¹ Nuiñe culture is also known for its distinctive, fine orange ceramics.

The Navidad Phase (1000 – 1500 A.D.) represents the zenith of Mixtec culture during the Post Classic period. It is the time of maximum population and the highest concentration of archaeological sites. Important urban sites became the centers of small Mixtec kingdoms or *cacicazgos* that filled the landscape. These polities were linked together in a network of kinship, marriage and military alliance. Mixtec artisans produced the pictographic manuscripts (codices), polychrome pottery, and fine jewelry for which they are most famous.

There is some shift in the settlement pattern between the Flores and Navidad Phases. Many earlier sites were abandoned and populations shifted to new locations. The higher ridges and hilltops were still utilized but new communities also appeared on the lower piedmonts and hillsides. The use of terraces also reached its highest level.

The great urban centers of the Navidad Phase had elaborate elite residential areas with several patios and surrounding rooms. Around these palace complexes were simpler structures inhabited by those of lower status. Ceremonial precincts were notably smaller than those of previous archaeological phases. Sites with undifferentiated architectural features and small mounds were also numerous during this period. These locations were seen as being dependent to the urban centers and their elite rulers.

IXCATLAN

In his visits to the community Cook⁸² briefly noted the presence of archaeological ruins in the immediate area of Ixcatlan. He offers no real description of the sites, nor

⁸⁰ Rincón, 1995.

⁸¹ Matadamas Díaz, 1997.

⁸² Cook, 1958.

does he provide any reference to their exact location. No other investigations concerning the prehistoric past have been conducted in the intervening years. An archaeological survey of sites was certainly beyond the scope of this project. I did have, however, the opportunity to see a significant portion of the municipio and offer some observations concerning the archeological remains in the area.

There is very little evidence of a significant pre-Columbian occupation on the valley floor near the modern community. Vestiges of rock walls and scattered sherds on the slopes east of the *barranca* behind the church suggest that the area was occupied. The only other cultural remains in the valley are found at the far western end, at the base of the hills. Much of the land here has been plowed and cultivated for such a long period of time it is difficult to determine from visible surface manifestations what might lie below. Archaeological remains are numerous, however, on the mountains slopes which surround the community.

In his description of the Mixteca Alta, Francisco de Burgoa mentions the abundance of terraces that gave the appearance of stairs to the landscape⁸³. This is certainly true of Ixcatlan. Rock terraces are found across the slopes of many hillsides. The remnants of cross channel terraces can be seen in the *barrancas* and drainages (Figures 24 and 25). It is obvious from these constructions that the prehispanic population focused a great deal of time and effort into effectively utilizing the marginal soils and limited water resources available.

South of the Río Sabino on the slopes of El Murillo several archaeological sites can be seen. The first is located on the promontory that overlooks the Escate Valley and the entrance into town. Further east, on the rise just above the springs that serve as the

⁸³ Burgoa, 1934.

communal water supply, is another notable site. There are several terraces visible along the ridge and remains of structures, as well.

The trail to Guautla continues east and crosses the “Llano de los reyes,” a place mentioned by Cook.⁸⁴ This location was apparently used for agricultural purposes; there are terraces across the gentle slope. The habitation area associated with the site is located on the ridge directly east, near a place the Ixcatec call El Rozo. There are significant archaeological ruins along this rise. Construction rubble lies in large mounds and covers a substantial area. One depression may represent the remains of a ballcourt.

The ridge of mountains north of Ixcatlan was well inhabited. Every peak and promontory from Cuanda, which overlooks San Pedro Nodón on the east, to Gandudo shows signs of pre-Columbian activity. Plazas and platforms are found on Culebrón which overlooks La Cumbre and the road that exits the community towards Tecomavaca.

On the far side of the mountains there are also numerous archaeological sites. The road to Tecomavaca descends into an area known as El Palmar. It is located above the Río Carpintero and the Río Vela. Terraces and house mounds are plentiful in the vicinity, but hidden in the underbrush (Figure 26). I am also told that there are many remains below in the Zacatal east towards the Río Vela. I have no doubt this area was once well populated and the location of considerable agricultural activity.

Directly north of town, on El Sotol, behind the cross that is venerated on the day of Santa Cruz, there is another large plaza and platform. The upper slope of the ridge above town contains numerous terraces. These terraces once provided agricultural space on the mountainside as well as suitable sites for habitation. The structures may have also served a defensive purpose for the prehispanic population that resided along the ridge.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Cook, 1958.

⁸⁵ Feinman, et.al., 2002.

Another important site is located further along that same ridge at the top of the *barranca* above the secondary school. There is an area enclosed by a low circular stone wall. Nearby there is a large area of rock rubble that indicates a site of significant importance. It may have been a palace structure belonging to the local nobility. Terraces are found facing the valley and cross channel terraces in the nearby *barrancas*.

As the ridge above the Ixcatlan valley continues west the frequency of archaeological sites diminishes. At the far end of the valley terraces again are seen ascending the *barrancas* up to La Cocina. This part of the valley contained a small concentration of agriculturalists utilizing the resources there.

Near Gandudo there is a hill known as El Tigre. A small platform rises from the flat surface of this site. The remains of numerous structures and rooms can be seen on the western slopes at this location. Directly below in the Cañada Colorada the remains of over fifty cross channel terraces can be seen. Some of these structures are still intact and continue to hold soil.

The high mountains quickly descend into a series ridges and canyons that extend northward to the Río Salado. Many of the peninsula-like ridges which separate the *barrancas* were inhabited by the ancient Ixcatec. The Loma de los Muertos extends out from the meadows of La Cumbre and beyond Mal Paso (Figures 27 and 28). It is comprised of a series of four small hills above the steep cliffs that overlook the Río Santiago. Each distinct hill contains archaeological remains. The structures include pyramids with very steep faces and perhaps a ball court (Figures 29 and 30). The descending slopes between have agricultural terraces. The remnants of precolumbian habitation can also be found on Loma Pretil, the next hill along the ridge.

On the west side of the canyon wall below Loma de los Muertos are two caves. One is a natural formation formed by the collapsing of the cobbles in the conglomerate

rock. The other cave appears to be man-made. It has straight sides and parallel walls. The entrances to both of these caves are decorated with pictographs. Geometric shapes and human figures are depicted in red paint (Figures 31 and 32). There are other painted figures known at Paso del Mono and Totoltepec towards the Río Xuquila.

One of the most impressive archaeological sites is located directly across the Río Santiago from the Loma de los Muertos. Its location is very close to the geographic center of the municipality, about four hours by horseback from town. The site is known as La Muralla. It is on a small rise along the ridge that continues northward below the slopes of Gandudito (Figure 33). The crown of the steep hill is surrounded by a high wall of trimmed stone which forms a rectangular ceremonial precinct (Figure 34). The long axis runs east and west. Around the perimeter of the plaza, just inside the wall, there are ten small pyramids, three on each side and two on each end. There is also a pyramid in the center of the compound with a low platform facing its western slope. Outside the wall to the east there is an area which appears to be the location of an extensive occupation. While the archaeological view of Ixcatlan is far from being complete, I expect that La Muralla was once a major center in the prehispanic period and perhaps even the former capital of the Ixcatec señorío.

The ruins at La Muralla, although they are very remote, have not escaped attention. A looter's pit appears in the top of one of the structures at the west end of the ceremonial precinct. Among the building stones removed by the excavator and tossed aside in his search for buried treasure I found two carved stones. Each of these was a soft limestone block measuring 30 cm by 60 cm and 30 cm thick. One stone has the figures of a human heart and an anthropomorphic flint knife. The other bears a skull and hand cut in deep relief (Figures 35 and 36). The figures on the stones are incomplete and appear to have been part of a larger mosaic. The iconography represented in these figures

seems to related to the murals found at the Post Classic sites of Tizatlan and Ocotelolco in Tlaxcala. These cities were two of the four capitals of the Tlaxcalan señorío at the time of the conquest.

Ocotelolco is located just north of the modern capitol of Tlaxcala. Excavations there revealed a bench extending across the back of a room that is painted with a series of human skulls, hearts, hands and shields.⁸⁶ These four polychrome figures are repeated along the entire length of the bench (Figure 37). The sequence is broken only by an altar that projects out into the room in the middle of the bench. The three sides of this feature are decorated in codex style with eight anthropomorphic serpents descending down across a black and white geometric background. The center band of the face of the altar contains a vertical spinal column and a cartouche lined with flints. Inside this area there is an anthropomorphic flint, an arrow, and a banner which rest in a vessel that has been painted with skeletal facial features. A black snake also appears in the scene.

At Tizatlan, just a short distance west of Ocotelolco, similar iconographic elements are found (Figure 38). The remains of a temple set on a low platform contains two small altars. The bench that ajoin altar A, on the west side of the room, is painted with a polychrome frieze which repeats the figures of human skulls, hearts, hands, and shields.⁸⁷ The front of the altar bears the images of two deities. Tlahuipantecuhltli, the Lord of the House of Dawn, is on the left. He can be recognized by his characteristic red and white striped body and flint headdress. In the scene at Tizatlan, Tlahuipantecuhltli has a skeletal head, as he frequently appears in the Codex Borgia. He is also often shown wearing a black mask, like that of Mixcoatl and the other stellar deities. Behind the figure of Tlahuipantecuhltli there is a disembodied serpent head. A large flint has been

⁸⁶ Contreras, 1993 and 1994.

⁸⁷ Noguera, 1929.

inserted into its mouth causing blood to gush out. Opposite Tlahuipantecuhtli is the image of Tezcatlipoca. His face is decorated with the usual yellow and black markings. A smoking mirror replaces his right foot.

Pohl has demonstrated the relationship of the images pictured at Ocotelolco and Tizatlan to the cult of Mixcoatl, or Camaxtli as he is known among the Tlaxcalans.⁸⁸ This deity was the principal god of Tlaxcala and Huexotzingo.⁸⁹ Considered to be the archetypical Chichimec, Camaxtli-Mixcoatl was the lord of the hunt, a superior archer. He is often depicted wearing animal skins as emblems of his prowess at trapping and killing wild game. Each year he was venerated during the feast of Quecholli during the fourteenth *veintena* of the ritual calendar.⁹⁰ These rites were described as the “greatest of all, ...with a maximum of merrymaking. The largest number of people died in sacrifice.”⁹¹

The iconography is also closely related with the Tzitzimine, including the personages known as Coatlicue and Cihuacoatl from central Mexican beliefs. The Tzitzimine are usually depicted as frightening beings with claws, skeleton jaws and a necklace of human hearts and hands (Figures 39 and 40). They are particularly feared for the havoc they cause during eclipses. They also represent the celestial bodies and deceased gods. The Tzitzimine played a significant role in ritual drinking ceremonies among the Tlaxcalans. Imagery associated with them also appears on drinking vessels (Figure 41) from the Puebla-Mixteca region.⁹²

The skull, heart, hand, and flint knife at La Muralla can be directly correlated to the friezes and altars at Tizatlan and Ocotelolco. The only difference in the iconography

⁸⁸ Pohl, 1998.

⁸⁹ Duran, 1971.

⁹⁰ Quiñones Keber, 1995.

⁹¹ Duran, 1971:142.

⁹² Pohl, 1998.

is the substitution of the flint knife in the Ixcatec set for the shield which appears in the Tlaxcalan examples. The close affinity of Mixcoatl to flint, however, would make this a very logical replacement in the scheme.

The Ixcatec appear to have participated in the same beliefs and practices seen in Tlaxcala. Pohl suggests that these concepts were well known among the elite of Oaxaca as well.⁹³ The royal houses of the Zapotec and Mixtec were connected to the important centers of Puebla and Tlaxcala by marriage alliance. Along these same corridors of interrelationships, ideology was also shared. Ixcatlan, we can assume, also intermarried into this network and was connected with the other elites lineages of the region.

THE RELACIÓN GEOGRAFICA AND PREHISTORY

The *relación geográfica* of Ixcatlan is perhaps the most important document relating to the history of the community. The original manuscript is preserved in the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas.⁹⁴ It came to Austin in 1937 as part of a group of materials that belonged to Don Joaquín García Icazbalceta.⁹⁵ As an avid historian and bibliophile, Don Joaquín had assembled an important collection of books and manuscripts concerning the colonial history of Mexico. Among these items are thirty-six *relaciones geográficas* from diverse locations throughout Mexico and Guatemala. The manuscripts were acquired through an agent in 1853. They must have been in Spanish archives at one time, but the specifics of the purchase by Don Joaquín remain unknown.⁹⁶

The *relaciones geográficas* were prepared in response to a questionnaire sent by King Philip II to New Spain during 1577. It requested a description of the communities

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ JGI XXIV-7.

⁹⁵ Benson, 1983.

⁹⁶ Bernal and Pimentel, 1984.

throughout the Spanish colonies, including information about the local population, their history, and traditions. The census also inquired regarding the geography, local resources, flora and fauna. Respondents were instructed to draw a map of the area.

The *relación geográfica* of Ixcatlan was prepared on October 13, 1579 under the direction of its *corregidor*, Luis de Velasco. He was assisted in the task by his scribe, Juan de Chavez, and an Augustinian friar, Pedro Coronel, as well as two citizens from Mexico City, Nicolás de Rendano and Juan Ortiz. Simón Vázquez served as the interpreter for two elderly informants mentioned in the preface, Alonzo and Juan Acatl, reported to be one hundred and eighty years old respectively.⁹⁷

In response to the first question the document relates an account of how Ixcatlan got its name:

...this village is called Ixcatlan, which means place of cotton. It is called such because many years ago, a famous captain, seeing that there was a lack of cotton, wanted to give order to how it was planted. And to irrigate the fields of cotton he opened a mountain and a tunnel from one side to the other, as it now appears, through which he wanted the river to pass. And as the water did not flow well, the mine, whose length, traversing all the mountain, was forty *braças* and twenty (*braças*) wide, was too high. And this channel is called *oloztoc*, which means round cave. And it is three leagues from this town, inside which there are on this vault many trophies painted: *macanas*, darts, arrows, bows, and helmets, like they use, such as the head of ducks, and bones and skeletons. And some say going there you must make a ceremony; they offered cotton there. And from this came the name Place of Cotton, as they wished that this town be wanting. It is also called Temazcalapa, because this channel is in the manner of a sweat bath. And still to this day they call it in this way.⁹⁸

There is little indication in this myth who was responsible for the attempt to grow cotton in the region or when. Cotton, of course, had been grown for many centuries in the Tehuacan Valley. It was domesticated there approximately 6000 B.C.⁹⁹ It is

⁹⁷ JGI XXIV-7.

⁹⁸ JGI XXIV-7.

⁹⁹ Byers, 1967.

interesting to note that the fields of cotton mentioned in this story were irrigated. Prehispanic irrigation canals found along the Río Xuquila may well have played a part in the introduction of cotton into Ixcatec territory.

The *relación geográfica* also provides the only information available concerning the religious practices of the ancient Ixcatec. It relates that the people of Ixcatlan worshipped two gods. One was the god of the males. His name was Acatl, meaning reed in Nahuatl. The god of the females was called Ocelotl, which means ocelot. Their names are certainly references to calendrical day signs, but the accompanying numerals were not mentioned. The manuscript indicates that the images of these gods were made of green stone, presumably jade, and stood about two palms high and were adorned with gold jewelry, such as bracelets, earrings and lip plugs. These figures were not kept in the open for public viewing, but wrapped in many layers of cloth fabric and secured in a basket, except at the time of the festivals and rituals held in their honor.

The first of these ceremonies was called Malinaltzi, the twisting. In this instance, the name refers to the act of drilling fire with a bow. The flames of the fire were used to burn copal and sacrifices which were offered to both the gods of Ixcatlan. They were placed on thrones and set on altars of flowers within their temples. The occasion was also marked with much dancing and merriment.

The next festival mentioned by the *relación geográfica* was dedicated to Ocelotl. Birds were sacrificed to this image in great numbers. Every Ixcatec was expected to make an offering. Those who could not personally attend the ceremony sent twice the usual number of birds for sacrifice.

The ritual dedicated to Acatl was only observed by the cacique of Ixcatlan. He offered the gilded plumes of a quetzal and a dove on a green stick. These items were carried by the lord from his home to the temple. A great procession of his subjects

followed behind chanting and singing. After making the sacrifices in behalf of the people, the cacique provided food and vestments for the members of his household and the other nobility in the community.

The last of the four feasts described in the *relación geográfica* was said to be the largest and most important of all. Quails, ducks, dogs and humans, both male and female, were sacrificed. Their hearts were cut out on a round stone that was set in front of the temple and then burned before the images of Acatl and Ocelotl. The bodies of the victims were later quartered and given to the populace.

The description of pre-Columbian religious practices in Ixcatlan are very reminiscent of ethnohistorical accounts of worship elsewhere in the region. The *relación geográfica* of Atlatlauca, a Cuicatec community, records that

They worshipped...demons in the form of statues made of wood and stone, which they called gods. And they had a great number of them, differentiated by the diverse names that they gave them: one for health and another for weather, temporal goods, and another for the women, finally for all the human necessities. They had in particular a god who they revered more than the others who was called Cuacoqunyos, who they had placed in a temple where they performed rites each year. And this god they called the god provider of all things. And thus they revered him as such.¹⁰⁰

The Mixtec also revered stone figures known as ñuhu. These sacred images were made of jade or turquoise. Occasionally they were inlaid with gold or precious stones. The objects were generally about a foot or two in height and were most often paired as male and female. They represented the primordial couple of the ruling lineage who were revered as being divine.¹⁰¹ In Achiutla, for example, the deities worshipped were known by their calendrical names, 7 Deer and 9 Movement. In colonial documents they were referred to as the “heart of the people.”¹⁰² Similar practices are recorded for communities

¹⁰⁰ De la Mezquita, 1580:166.

¹⁰¹ Terraciano, 2001.

¹⁰² Jansen, 1982.

throughout the Mixteca Alta including Tilantongo, Yanhuitlan, Molcaxtepec, Juxtlahuaca, and Acatlan.¹⁰³ Many of these sacred couples are represented in the Mixtec codices.

Upon their death, the remains of the Mixtec royal elite were preserved and worshipped. Members of nobility were considered to be the off-spring of the gods and shared the attributes. They represented the deities on earth. “Multiple ñuhu reflected the local nature of Mesoamerican religion and the inherent autonomy of socio-political organization. Each corporate entity and each household for that matter, had its own sacred ancestors.”¹⁰⁴ It is clear from the *relación geográfica* that the Ixcatec participated in this tradition. Terraciano considers the account of religious practices in Ixcatlan to be a classic example of pre-Columbian worship in the region.¹⁰⁵ The ideology and ritual that the Ixcatec shared with the Mixtec and their Oaxacan neighbors, as reflected in the *relación geográfica*, co-existed with Tolteca-Chichimeca ideology from central Mexico.

The *relación geográfica* indicates that Ixcatlan not only had a ruling aristocracy of hereditary nobles, but also revered a class of priests who officiated in their religious ceremonies. These men were separated from the rest of society and required to live in the temple precincts. Those who were married prior to their election to the priesthood were forced to leave their families and avoid all contact with them. They were also held to a strict code of moral conduct. Sexual relations were specifically forbidden and severely punished with death and dismemberment.

Eight priests served the people of Ixcatlan, four for each of the principal gods. One of them was chosen to be the high priest. He dressed in a black robe with many colored tassels and wore a small crown as a symbol of this authority. The other priests

¹⁰³ Terraciano, 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Terraciano, 2001: 264.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid: 261.

wore paper robes of many colors, except on ceremonial occasions, when they put on colorful *mantas* decorated with feathers and rabbit fur.

According to the *relación geográfica*, Ixcatlan was an independent señorío ruled over by Tzintectli and his son Quautzintectli. This later lord was subjected by Moctezuma and forced to yield his authority to a governor appointed by the Mexica and pay tribute to Tenochtitlan. The document is not clear which of the two Moctezumas is responsible for conquering Ixcatlan.

Moctezuma Ilhuicamina, who ruled the Aztec empire from 1440 to 1468, was the first to assert the dominion of the Mexica into the Mixtec Alta. This region was one of the easiest remaining targets available to the expanding empire and one that needed to be subdued if further incursion to the south was to be contemplated.¹⁰⁶ Moctezuma's opportunity to move into Oaxaca came in 1458 when the Mexica merchants encountered problems in Coixtlahuaca. This capitol of the Chocho people, which neighbored Ixcatlan on the west, was said to be one of the greatest cities in the land. The market held there was full of luxury commodities, including "gold, feathers, cacao, finely worked gourds, clothing, cochineal, and dyed thread made of rabbit fur."¹⁰⁷ The event attracted merchants from throughout central Mexico. Torquemada indicates that on one occasion the Chocho ruler Atonaltzin refused passage to the Aztec traders through his lands.¹⁰⁸ Tezozomoc records that the confrontation was much more hostile and that the 160 Mexica merchants present at the market were robbed and killed by order of Atonaltzin.¹⁰⁹ Whatever the exact circumstances of the encounter, the reaction of Ilhuicamina was swift. Upon hearing of the news from Coixtlahuaca, he immediately raised an army of 200,000

¹⁰⁶ Hassig, 1988.

¹⁰⁷ Duran, 1971.

¹⁰⁸ Torquemada, 1723.

¹⁰⁹ Tezozomoc,

warriors to extract his vengeance on the Chocho capital. Expecting the worst from the Mexica, Atonaltzin arranged the assistance of his allies from Tlaxcala and Huexotzinco, longstanding rivals of Tenochtitlan, to defend Coixtlahuaca. A novelized version of the event also relates that the Chocho received reinforcements from many of the prominent Mixtec kingdoms.¹¹⁰ There is, however, no suggestion from the historical accounts that such large-scale cooperation ever occurred.

The siege of the city by the Aztec was quick and brutal. As the battlefield filled with corpses, the Chocho retreated into their capital. The Mexica forces pursued them without mercy. They set fire to the temples and homes as the inhabitants fled into the surrounding mountains. The citizens eventually surrendered and offered to become vassals to the Aztec lords. Atonaltzin was put to death for his defiance and numerous Chocho captives were taken to Tenochtitlan to serve as sacrificial offerings.¹¹¹ The defeat of the Coixtlahuaca gave the Aztec empire an important foothold from which to pursue the unconquered regions of Oaxaca.

Following the fall of Atonaltzin, Moctzuma Ilhuicamina pressed his campaign against the Mixtecs of Teposcolula before retiring this army and concerning himself with conquest in other regions.¹¹² Sometime later he sent forces through southern Puebla and conquered as far as Teotitlan del Camino in Oaxaca.¹¹³ This placed the military might of the Mexica on Ixcatlan's western and northern borders. It is not known if the Ixcatec yielded to the superior forces of the Mexica at this time. Perhaps they did not succumb and lose their independence until the reign of Moctezuma II, just prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Between 1503 and 1512 he directed a series of campaigns to consolidate the

¹¹⁰ Martínez Gracida, 1906.

¹¹¹ Torquemada, 1723.

¹¹² Chimalpahin, 1997.

¹¹³ Hassig, 1988.

Aztec authority established by his predecessors over the Mixteca Alta. The empire was expanded across what is now the state of Oaxaca. Moctezuma's realm not only engulfed the mountain Mixtec kingdoms, but incorporated the Zapotec as well. The Mexica armies pushed all the way to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and then beyond, along the coast of the Pacific Ocean into the province of Soconusco in the state of Chiapas.¹¹⁴

These forays across Oaxaca included return engagements in Coixtlahuaca to eliminate rebellious sentiment in the area. Cetecpatl, the Chocho ruler, joined forces with the lord of Tzotzolan to initiate an offensive against the Mexica presence in the region in 1506.¹¹⁵ As he was hiding from the imperial army that pursued him, Cetecpatl was betrayed by his brother, Cuitlahuatzin, the governor of Guautla. The Coixtlahuacan rebels were captured and ceremoniously sacrificed by the Aztec. As recompense for his loyalty, Cuitlahuatzin was given his vanquished brother's position at the Chocho capital.¹¹⁶ Eventually a military force was garrisoned in the city to secure the peace. The site became responsible for the collection of tribute owed by various communities of the Mixteca and Cuicateca. Ixcatlan was probably placed under the dominion of the Aztec lords by this time and included in the province subject to Coixtlahuaca. It does not specifically appear however, on any conquest or tribute lists that survive. This region was required to pay 1,200 cotton mantas of various designs, 400 loincloths and huipiles, 800 handfuls of quetzal feathers, 40 bags of cochineal, 20 gourd bowls of gold dust, 2 strings jade stones (chalchihuitl), and assorted feathered costumes and shields for warriors.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Hassig, 1988.

¹¹⁵ One flint

¹¹⁶ Torquemada, 1723.

¹¹⁷ Berdan, 1987.

From my limited observations in Ixcatlan, it is obvious that there a significant number and great diversity of archaeological sites within the *municipio*. They range from small, single room structures that were scattered through the landscape, to palaces and temple complexes in prominent locations. It can be assumed that the ancient Ixcatecs were involved in the same cultural developments that are found in the surrounding areas. I believe that a thorough survey would find a long sequence of prehispanic occupation in the area. It is probable that sites in Ixcatlan date back at least as far as the formative period. Classic and Post Classic occupations are certainly more numerous, as they are in the neighboring region. If true to the settlement pattern seen in the Tehuacan Valley, the Cuicatlan Cañada, and the Mixteca Alta, Classic sites in Ixcatlan are located on the high ridges and Post Classic sites are fortified.

Chapter 3: Spanish Encomienda and Native Cacicazgo

After the fall of Tenochtitlan and the Mexica empire, Spanish influence quickly spread through the central highlands and into the Mixteca Alta. Representatives from eight communities in the Coixtlahuaca region traveled to Izucar and capitulated to Cortez and his army in 1520. Pedro de Alvarado was sent into Oaxaca for the purpose of establishing Spanish authority.

Various communities of the region were quickly given in *encomienda*. Santa María Ixcatlan was granted to Rodrigo de Segura and Garcia Velez on August 24, 1522.¹¹⁸ As recompense for their services to the Crown, these two men shared the tribute produced by the members of the community. These same *encomenderos* each received one half of the tribute from Zapotitlan de Salinas in Puebla, as well. After the death of Garcia Velez in 1526, his half of Ixcatlan was granted to Segura. With the entire tribute of Ixcatlan awarded to Segura, he lost his share of Zapotitlan.¹¹⁹

Rodrigo Segura was a native of Sevilla and a career military man. Born in 1490, he was already a seasoned soldier before coming to Cuba in 1518, having served in Italy, France, and Africa. Once in the New World, he joined Cortes' expedition and participated in the assault on the Mexica at Tenochtitlan and the pacification of the Oaxaca region. Wounded in combat, he was left crippled by his injuries. After leaving the army, Segura resided a brief while in Mexico City, but eventually settled in the city of Puebla.¹²⁰

By 1525 Segura became involved in mining and formed a partnership with Lorenzo de Genorés. They had mines in Oaxaca and elsewhere. Segura contracted with

¹¹⁸ Zavala, 1973 and Gerhardt, 1972.

¹¹⁹ Zavala, 1973 and Gerhardt, 1972.

¹²⁰ Icaza, 1969 and Himmerich y Valencia 1991.

his partner to provide Indians to work in the mines. It is quite probable that some of these unfortunate laborers were taken from the population of Ixcatlan, as described in the *relación geográfica*.¹²¹

Segura learned in 1533 that his wife in Spain had died, leaving his two daughters without support. On the first of December in that year he petitioned the Audiencia for permission to travel to Spain for the purpose of remarrying. He then planned to return to Mexico with his family. It was anticipated that he would be gone for the period of two years. Not wanting to lose his *encomienda*, Segura requested that it be administered by Gerónimo López, the secretary of the Real Audiencia, in his absence.¹²² He was successful in this venture. Upon arriving in New Spain again he settled in Puebla with his new wife, Marina de Rivera.¹²³

With his return to Mexico, Segura once again received Ixcatlan as his *encomienda*. He reentered the mining industry and worked mines in the Tehuacan valley.¹²⁴ He also participated in the silk trade. In 1541 he contracted to sell 50 pounds of silk to the merchant Juan de San Diego.¹²⁵ In 1548 he entered into an agreement with the people of Ixcatlan for them to provide him with the silk they produced for a three year period.¹²⁶

Segura was granted a small piece of land in the Ixcatec *sujeto* of Temascalapa in 1551.¹²⁷ This property measured 60 *brazas* square and was for his own personal use and

¹²¹ Millares Carlo and Mantecon, 1946 and JGI XXIV-7.

¹²² Paso y Troncoso, 1939, and Zavala, 1973.

¹²³ Boyd-Bowman, 1988.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Gerhard, 1992 and Zavala, 1982.

¹²⁷ Zavala, 1982 and Gerhard, 1992.

benefit. Simultaneously, the citizens of Ixcatlan were released from their obligation to cultivate silk for the *encomendero*.¹²⁸

That same year Segura was chastised for having not paid tithing on the income from his silk trade. The bishop of Oaxaca also noted that Ixcatlan did not have a church or clergy to provide ecclesiastical instruction to the native population. Segura was ordered to pay that which he owed in tithing, as well as the funds needed to provide for the conversion of the Indians and the administration of the holy sacraments, as he was obligated to do.¹²⁹

The earliest recovered tribute records from Ixcatlan bear the date of September 29, 1543.¹³⁰ The *tasación* required that Ixcatlan, Coyula, Nopala and its *sujeto* Tamascalapa provide four payments during the year. Each shipment consisted of 36 mantas, five measures (xiquipiles) of cacao, each with 8,000 beans, ten huipils, ten shirts and ten pieces of cotton cloth (mantas). The Ixcatec were ordered to take these goods to Puebla de los Angeles. In addition, they were to provide a *carga* of beans and another of salt, plus thirty fowl every twenty days. They must also deliver these items to Segura in Puebla. Three *fanegas* of maize were to be planted annually by the Ixcatec and harvested for their *encomendero*. Segura was also awarded six servants for his home and one pound of silkworms. On September 16, 1550, Ixcatlan was granted relief from having to provide the six Indians that gave service to the *encomendero*.¹³¹ In exchange they were required to pay the value of the service from their harvests or an equal monetary value.

On November 13, 1551 the citizens of Ixcatlan complained to the Audiencia in Mexico that they could not make the tribute payments that were established eight years

¹²⁸ Gerhard, 1992.

¹²⁹ Zavala, 1982.

¹³⁰ Gonzalez de Cossio, 1952.

¹³¹ Gerhard, 1992.

earlier.¹³² The new *tasación* was set at six large *mantas* and ten feet of fine cloth, the harvest of three *fanegas* of maize, and six servants. This represented a considerable reduction in income for Segura.

This tribute was again modified on December 19, 1554, at which time it was set at three hundred gold pesos, one chicken, and the planting of three *fanegas* of maize.¹³³ The Ixcathec were also relieved of the responsibility of having to deliver the tribute to Puebla. On July 8, 1555, it was agreed that Ixcatlan would no longer contribute any goods to their *encomendero*, but pay the sum of four hundred gold pesos instead.¹³⁴ Only two years later the Ixcatecs cited difficulties in raising the required payment in gold. They offered twenty-four thousand cacao beans in twelve equal shipments. However, the assessment of four hundred gold pesos continued at least through 1560.¹³⁵

Another change in the payment of Ixcathec tribute was made on September 1, 1562. On this occasion a substantial increase was granted to Segura.¹³⁶ He was to receive one thousand gold pesos each year, the equivalent of nine *tomines* for each married head of household and half that value for every widow or widower. This is done with the stipulation that he provide a church and clergy for the community, something expected of all *encomenderos*. This responsibility had apparently been avoided by Segura for quite some time. Now Segura was again asked to provide a church and religious instruction for the Ixcathec. The financial cost, however, appears to have been passed on to the community.

Segura's problems with the church resurfaced in May of 1565. Testimony was taken in Quiotepec for an inquiry by inquisition authorities concerning a complaint that

¹³² Gonzalez de Cossio, 1952.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Paso y Troncoso, 1939.

¹³⁶ Gonzalez de Cossio, 1952.

he was spreading heretical ideas. He had expressed the opinion that Christ did not know the hour of his death, but had to be told by an angel.¹³⁷

It is believed that Segura died about 1565 and the *encomienda* was inherited by his widow, who died a short time later. For a brief while the tribute from Ixcatlan reverted to the Crown. It was reassigned to Luis de Velasco sometime after 1580.¹³⁸

The Spanish colonial system recognized the rights and authority of the hereditary nobility that ruler prior to the conquest. Caciques as principales were able to maintain control of their lands and resources. They were able to add to their holdings by requesting *mercedes*, or grants, from the Crown. Cacicazgos were considered inalienable estates that could be passed on to posterity. (Taylor, 1972)

It is clear from limited surviving documents that the authority of the native Ixcatec nobility was recognized well into the eighteenth century. During his visit to the community, Cook¹³⁹ was able to examine and take notes on the original colonial manuscripts that are held in the municipal archives. I was also able to locate transcripts of these archival resources in the records of the Secretaria de Reforma Agraria. Given this agency's interests in land issues, some of the original documents were only summarized and not copied in their entirety.

The earliest known cacique of Ixcatlan is Don Juan Quesbal. Cook suggests that he may have been baptized about 1540. Juan Quesbal died at the age of 35, leaving a son, Domingo de San Miguel, who was 10 years of age at the time. Because of Domingo's young age, his aunt, Catarina Quautla, Juan's sister, assumed possession of the cacicazgo. The archival records note that the usual line of inheritance is through the male members of the family, but an exception was made in this case. Doña Catarina had

¹³⁷ AGN Inquisición vol. 5, exp 9.

¹³⁸ Gerhardt, 1972.

¹³⁹ Cook, 1958.

a daughter, Ana Quiansuchil, but she was not permitted to inherit the cacicazgo. The title instead reverted to Juan de Santiago, the son of Domingo de San Miguel. Don Juan de Santiago, who married Marta de Guzman, had three children, Don Juan Vasquez, Doña Ines de Guzman, and Don Alvaro de Guzman. By the spring of 1588, both the cacique and his wife had died leaving their children, aged 6 years, 5 years, and 3 years, respectively, orphans. Once again, as the heirs to the cacicazgo were minor children, a guardian was appointed by the *corregidor*, a Spaniard by the name of Juan Vásquez de Marroquín.¹⁴⁰ The estate left by Don Juan de Santiago and his wife to their children included a home and land, plus livestock, a loom, clothing, seeds and iron with a total value of 404 gold *pesos* and 4 *tomines*. The tenure of Vásquez Marroquin as the guardian of the estate was short-lived and apparently not beneficial for the young heirs of the cacicazgo. On the sixth of December 1590, a petition filed by Doña Lucia, on behalf of the children, asked for an accounting of the inheritance. The review conducted by the *corregidor*, Gaspar Sandier Gornica, found that the information and verification supplied by Juan Vasquez de Marroquin was incomplete. He was ordered to produce documentation to explain the shortage, under penalty of a fine for not doing so. He was relieved of his responsibility and new guardians were appointed, Francisco de Villegan and Pedro Díaz.

Unfortunately, the Ixcatec transcripts of Ixcatec documents do not make it clear how the children of Don Juan de Santiago fit into the line of succession in the cacicazgo. Cook indicates the eldest child, Juan, inherited his father's title, but died childless. His brother Alvaro then received the right of authority. The next cacique of Ixcatlan is

¹⁴⁰ SRH Legajo 703.1.

Baltazar de Santiago. His relationship to Alvaro is not clearly established in the documents. The two may well have been father and son, as Cook suggests.¹⁴¹

Baltazar de Santiago was married to Doña Catarin Bautista. He died in 1621. It appears that Don Baltazar also has 3 children, María de Guzman, Juan de Guzman and Miguel de Guzman. All three are recognized as caciques of Ixcatlan at one time or another. María, who must have been the eldest, married Melchor de los Reyes y Salazar, the cacique of Tepelmeme. Don Melchor acted in conjunction with his young brothers-in-law, Juan and Miguel, to secure their right and expand the holdings of the cacicazgo. Little is known about Juan de Guzman y Santiago. His brother, Miguel, lived until 1699, but died without heirs. In his last will and testament, everything was left to his nieces and nephews, the offspring of his sister. María, a widow since 1657, had six children: Nicolas de Guzman, Joseph, Antonio, Miguel, Fulgencio, and María. Antonio inherits the titles to Ixcatlan from his mother's lineage. Don Antonio married Nicolasa de Mojares, a member of the royal family of Quiotepec. They had at least one child, a daughter, Gertrudis Santiago y Salazar. She came to be yet another female who was recognized as *cacica* in Ixcatlan. She married Carlos Neri de la Cruz, the cacique of San Cristóbal Suchixlahuaca. Their son Francisco del Rosario Santiago y Salazar was granted possession of all the lands of the cacicazgo, as well as the right of community service necessary to sustain his office. The historical record of the cacicazgo ends in 1755 when Francisco's son, Don José Manuel Santiago y Salazar, petitions for the title of his father.

¹⁴¹ Cook, 1958.

Chapter 4: The Historical Geography of Colonial Ixcatlan

MAPS OF THE RELACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA

Question number ten in the instructions to the *relación geográfica* asks that a map be prepared. There are two maps accompanying the text of the *relación geográfica* from the Ixcatlan area. While of different sizes, they are almost identical in appearance and content. The landscape of the region is depicted in a conventional European style, devoid of any indigenous influences. The scattered settlements are represented by churches, most of which appear to be fanciful creations. Fine lines are used to shade the numerous hills and give shape to them. This may have been an attempt to make the maps appear to be wood-block prints.¹⁴² Color was also applied to shade the features of the map. Mundy suggests that the two maps were prepared by the *corregidor*, Gonzalo Velazquez de Lara, who oversaw the preparation of the manuscript. There is, however, no direct evidence in the text to verify that idea.

The maps show the hilly regions of the Mixteca Alta and the Mazateca separated by the “camino real de Oaxaca.” The rivers which drain the landscape are colored blue. The glosses on the map refer to one as the Río Alvarado. This river is now known as the Río Santo Domingo. The tributary to the south is the Río Grande. The Río Salado joins it from the north through the lower Tehuacan valley of Puebla.

The largest of the maps in the *relación* (30 x 30 cm.) is designated Map A (Figure 42) by Mundy.¹⁴³ It accompanies the text prepared by the Ixcatec in response to the questionnaire. Ixcatlan appears on the map in the center of the lower margin, colored in red. The *sujetos* of Nopala, Teopotongo and Coyula are also highlighted in red (Figure

¹⁴² Mundy, 1996.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

43). No other structures on the map were painted red; this color is unique to the Ixcatec settlements. The neighboring communities depicted on the map are Tequixtepec, Coixtlahuaca, Guautla, as well as Quiotepec and Tecomavaca. Teculula (Los Cues) and Mazatlan also appear on the map. They are both *agencias* belonging to Teotitlan del Camino and are mentioned in its *relación geográfica*.¹⁴⁴

The second map in the *relación geográfica*, which Mundy calls Map B,¹⁴⁵ is found with the reply from Quiotepec, another of the communities included in the *corregimiento* (Figure 44). It is almost identical to Map A, but smaller in size, measuring only 18.5 x 20 centimeters. Mundy suggests it may have been a “trial run” done by the artist to prepare himself for the execution of Map A.¹⁴⁶ This second map is somewhat cruder and has a large smudge in the upper right-hand corner. There is, however, one major distinction between the two maps. The shading on the second map goes beyond Ixcatlan and its three *sujetos* to include Tecomavaca, Quiotepec and their dependents. Coyula, Aguacatitlan, Tectzistepeque, and Tecuasco are four of the five *sujetos* which belong to Quiotepec, according to the response provided to number eleven in the King’s questionnaire. Puchotl is also mentioned in the text, but does not appear on the accompanying map. The other settlements found on the map fall outside the jurisdiction of the *corregimiento* and are therefore not shaded.

The maps of the *relación geográfica* provide us with an excellent understanding of the geographic relationships between Ixcatlan and its *sujetos*. The settlement of San Miguel Nopala flourished briefly on a spur at the foot of Montañita, ten kilometers north of Ixcatlan (Figure 45). It appears to have been populated at least until 1636, when it is mentioned in land grant given to the cacicazgo by the viceroy, the Marqués de

¹⁴⁴ *Relación geográfica de Teotitlan del Camino*.

¹⁴⁵ Mundy, 1996.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Cadereyta.¹⁴⁷ The ruins of its large church can still be seen today protruding above the forest that covers the site.

The church at Nopala was a substantial structure (Figures 46). The interior of the single nave measures 23 by 6.5 meters, large enough to hold a sizable congregation. A small baptistery was located on the left, just inside the door. Its walls were approximately 1.3 meters thick and constructed of trimmed stone with rubble fill. There is not enough rock fall in the church today to suggest that it had a vaulted roof. The building was probably covered with palm thatch, as is still common in Ixcatec domestic architecture. There is, however, considerable rubble in the area that would have contained the altar. This portion of the church may have been covered by an arch. The remains of several rooms can be seen contiguous to the main building on the east. (Figures 47 through 49) A large atrium occupies the space in front of the church. There are remains of other structures in the immediate vicinity, suggesting that there was indeed a community here. The vestiges of pre-Columbian habitation are also evident nearby. Several open burial caves (sotanos) are found behind the church and their contents visible. The church was certainly built in Nopala for the benefit of a preexisting population.

According to an Ixcatec legend, San Miguel Nopala was once a community under siege. Its citizens were pursued and consumed by a giant eagle. They sought refuge among the numerous caves in the vicinity. As they were unable to work their fields or hunt for game, many starved to death. The bones that litter the subterranean features at Nopala are seen as testaments to their awful fate. Those few who managed to escape San Miguel did so by making the journey to Ixcatlan under the cover of darkness one night and joining the population of the *cabecera*.

¹⁴⁷ SRA Expediente 276.1/304.

During the sixteenth century, Nopala had jurisdiction over a dependent *sujeto*, or perhaps better said a *rancho*. San Antonio Temascalapa appears in the 1543 *tasación* that established the tribute that Ixcatlan was required to pay its *encomendero*, Rodrigo de Segura.¹⁴⁸ Soon thereafter, in 1551, Segura was granted ownership of a small piece of property in Temascalapa.¹⁴⁹ This settlement is not depicted on the map of the *relación geográfica*, perhaps because it had already ceased to exist, or was too small to be considered significant.

Santiago Teopatlango is the second outlying community that is depicted on the map of the *relación geográfica*. It is located nine kilometers northeast of Ixcatlan. The name Teopatlango is not preserved among the Ixcatec today. The location of the colonial habitation is simply known as the Iglesia del Río Santiago. The church itself is a small structure of simple construction that measures approximately 13 by 4 meters (Figure 50). There is another small room at the back of the edifice on the left side. Only the foundations remain of the building. It was certainly not large enough to hold many worshippers. Most religious activities at this site would have been conducted outdoors.

The church was constructed on a platform 40 meters long, 36 meters wide and just over one meter high (Figure 51). This raised space appears to have served as the atrium. It is very probable that the platform is an earlier, pre-Columbian construction. Access to the platform was gained by stairs on the front left corner and the middle of the right side. The remains of several other features can also be seen in this atrium.

The colonial structures of Teopatlango are located at the base of Gandudito, along a ridge overlooking the canyon formed by the Río Santiago (Figure 52). This stream begins at the springs above Mal Paso and offers a permanent flow of water. The large

¹⁴⁸ González de Cossío, 1952.

¹⁴⁹ Zavala 1982.

pre-Columbian ceremonial center located nearby at El Muralla indicates the importance of this area prior to the conquest. The population of Teopatongo relocated early in the colonial period. The *relación geográfica* is the last historical document to make mention of this settlement.¹⁵⁰

The other *sujeto* to Ixcatlan mentioned in the *relación geográfica* is San Juan Coyula. The remnants of this settlement are found nine kilometers east of Ixcatlan. They occupy a plain between the Río Frio and the Río Vela, just below an area known as El Palmar. This is the easiest of the three colonial communities to access. The road from Ixcatlan to Tecomavaca passes within a few meters of the old church.

The church at Coyula was constructed of large blocks of shaped limestone laid with caliche as mortar. The outside dimensions of the building measure 18 by 7.5 meters (Figure 53). The small structure was no doubt covered with a palm roof. A large atrium 32 by 26 meters also served as public worship space. The building is well hidden in the dense vegetation that covers the site today. There may be other colonial constructions scattered in the underbrush. The remains of a prehispanic population can also be found in the vicinity.

The last reference to the community of Coyula appeared in 1636. A grant of various properties to the cacicazgo of Ixcatlan by Don Lupe Diez de Armendariz, the Marqués de Cadereyta and Viceroy of New Spain, mentions that one of the sites bordered with San Juan Coyula.¹⁵¹ Rincón cites the *Theatro Americano* to suggest that Coyula was still inhabited by thirty families in the eighteenth century.¹⁵² However, the settlement of Coyula to which Villaseñor y Sánchez refers is clearly not the Coyula that was dependent

¹⁵⁰ JGI XXIV-7

¹⁵¹ SRA Expediente 276.1/304.

¹⁵² Rincón, 1996.

Ixcatlan. It is instead the *sujeto* of Santiago Quiotepec that is located on the other side of the Cuicatlan Cañada.¹⁵³

In the local lore San Juan Coyula is said to have been a wealthy and prosperous town. Its inhabitants are not remembered as being Ixcatec, but rather cannibals who would capture and devour those from Ixcatlan when the opportunity arose. Their presence in the area made life very precarious and difficult for the Ixcatec. Oral history indicates that the people of Coyula abandoned this settlement and moved out of the area.¹⁵⁴ As they left, they hid the church bell in a cave nearby. It still rings every year to mark the anniversary of the community's patron saint, Saint John. The former site of San Juan is still considered dangerous by many Ixcatec and a place worth avoiding.

Coyula is also thought to be enchanted. Travelers through that region must be careful not to fall into its trap. There is a lavishly-furnished store on the site that occasionally opens to the tired and thirsty individuals who pass by. Beckoned by the gold and silver trappings, the visitors who enter become distracted by the beautiful accommodations. As they sit and admire the surroundings, perhaps with the thought of taking some of the riches, the enchantment closes. The unsuspecting traveler will remain in the store until it opens again.

In Ixcatlan the story is told of two men from Tecomavaca who were headed back down the mountain and stopped to rest in Coyula. They were surprised to find such a beautiful place on their journey home. They eagerly entered to have a drink. Time seemed to stand still as they enjoyed the surroundings. One of the men soon realized that they had foolishly ventured into an enchantment. He encouraged his traveling companion to quickly exit and hurried for the door. The friend hesitated to leave such a

¹⁵³ Villaseñor y Sánchez, 1746.

¹⁵⁴ Cook, 1958.

lovely and comfortable place. Before he could be coaxed out, the vision closed, trapping him inside. The first man sadly made his way home alone. For a whole year the missing man's wife and children had to work and support themselves. The first man returned to Coyula exactly one year later to find the beautiful store open again. There inside he saw his friend still drinking, oblivious to the rest of the world. He called to him, urging him to leave, but he refused. Risking his own existence, the man rushed inside, grabbed his friend, and dragged him out. When they turned around to look back, the enchantment closed. Only then did the second man realize the predicament in which he had been caught. This history only reinforces the feeling of danger associated with San Juan Coyula. Many men detour around the site as they travel along the trail towards Tecomavaca, afraid of what they might encounter.

The three *sujetos* of the relación geográfica shared several features. They were all situated along the northern slopes of the high mountain range which crosses the area. Their positions gave the residents access to permanent water supplies from spring-fed streams that emerged nearby. The sites also offered them proximity to the several distinct ecological zones of the region, allowing the utilization of the cooler, moister mountain forests above, as well as the warmer, drier hills and canyons below. The abundance of pre-Columbian archaeological remains in association with each of these three communities indicates that they had existed for quite some time prior to the conquest.

The *sujetos* of Ixcatlan shown on the relación geográfica were not the only communities administered by the *cabecera* in 1579. For whatever reason the map is incomplete. Three more colonial settlements of the Ixcatec cacicazgo are only known through references in other historical documents. These were located along the course of the Río Xuquila, on the northern frontier.

San Cristóbal once existed on the south side of the river, just upstream from the point where it enters the Río Salado. The ruins found on the site are listed in the boundary survey of 1891 as being a *mojonera*¹⁵⁵ delimiting communal land holdings.¹⁵⁶ A few hardy Ixcatec still have fields and orchards in the area. The property on the other side of the Río Xuquila from San Cristóbal was owned by Ixcatlan until it was sold to retired General Ignacio Mejia in 1879.¹⁵⁷ The ancient inhabitants of the site utilized a system of canals and aqueducts to make year-round farming possible in this otherwise marginal agricultural setting. As noted earlier, the archaeological remains in the vicinity are attributed to the late Palo Blanco and Venta Salada phases (approximately 400 to 1520 A.D.).¹⁵⁸

Colonial Santa Cruz was also situated on the banks of the Río Xuquila, about nine kilometers upstream from the confluence with the Río Salado. Here the trail that follows the Espinazo del Diablo from Nopala descends into the river canyon. Santa Cruz Viejo was also designated as a boundary marker by the surveys of 1743 and 1891.¹⁵⁹

Further up the Río Xuquila, as the river makes a big bend in front of Mahuizapan, is the site of San Gerónimo. Today this land is well inside the territory of Tepelmeme. Ixcatlan apparently recognized the settlement there as being on its frontier in the sixteenth century, but relinquished its claim in the early colonial period. Coixtlahuaca, Nanahuatipan, and Zapotitlan de Salinas all sought to control the area at one time or another.¹⁶⁰ A description of San Gerónimo Xuquila written in 1777, perhaps long after its habitation had been abandoned, refers to this area as a remarkably scenic garden, full

¹⁵⁵ Boundary marker, usually of piled stone sometimes covered with plaster.

¹⁵⁶ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, Legajo 30.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Woodbury and Neely, 1972.

¹⁵⁹ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones

¹⁶⁰ AGN Tierras, vol. 651-652, and AGEO Conflictos, Legajo 54.

of fruits and surrounded by the high cliffs of the river.¹⁶¹ This productive agricultural land was the center of dispute until the twentieth century. The debate between the different factions eventually escalated to include the governors of Oaxaca and Puebla.¹⁶²

The colonial communities on the Río Xuquila took advantage of the abundant water to cultivate the pockets of alluvial soils along the river banks. The warm climate of the *tierra caliente* offered conditions which permitted the production of tropical fruits that could not be grown in the cooler elevations and drier conditions of the highlands. The agricultural lands along the Xuquila can be utilized year-round without fear of frost. Corn and other food crops sown early in this riverine environment will ripen and can be harvested about the time they are being planted in the Mixteca Alta.

Despite the excellent supply of water and the other advantages to the Ixcatec in maintaining these habitations along the river, they were all abandoned. The land titles prepared in 1743 for the cacique of Ixcatlan, Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar, refers to each of these sites as being unpopulated.¹⁶³ These settlements had probably been vacant since before the close of the seventeenth century, but the land is still utilized by the Ixcatec today.

The colonial period under Spanish rule was very traumatic on the native communities of New Spain. Disease, famine, slavery, and *repartimiento*, among other afflictions, both natural and social, caused a tremendous decline in the population. Settlements gradually succumbed and eventually disappeared. Others survived with only a small percentage of their inhabitants. Many towns were forced to abandon their homes and move to a new site or join together with another community. Without a doubt, the

¹⁶¹ Liebano 1994.

¹⁶² Uriarte y Tamayo 1908.

¹⁶³ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, Legajo 30.

cacicazgo of Ixcatlan was no exception. For whatever the reasons, these *sujetos* had all vanished by 1743.

PLAN TOPOGRAPHIQUE D'IXCATLAN

Joseph Marius Alexis Aubin was a native of Tourettes-les-Frayences, France. Schooled in science and mathematics, he had the opportunity to travel to Mexico in 1830. While there, he developed an interest in the pre-Columbian cultures of the New World and began collecting documents relative to this topic. Before returning to his homeland in 1840, Aubin had acquired a marvelous collection of native texts and pictorial works. Two years prior to his death in 1889, the collection was sold to Eugene Goupil. The manuscripts continued in his private possession until January 1898, when they were given to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris by his widow. Document number 103 of this collection is known as the Plan topographique d'Ixcatlan (Figures 54 through 57).

The first description of the manuscript was published by Boban,¹⁶⁴ after the collection had been acquired by Eugène Goupil. He offered a transcription of some of the glosses which appear on the document and a translation of several of the nahuatl toponyms. His interpretation of the map, however, was somewhat fanciful. Not knowing of Santa María Ixcatlan, he was confused by the references to Oztoc and Huastepéc which he mistakenly saw in the map. Boban suggested that the document referred to an area in the vicinity of the peaks of Popocatepetl and Orizaba. This misunderstanding followed the Plan topographique to the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris in 1898 and persisted until Glass correctly attributed it to Santa María Ixcatlan, Oaxaca.¹⁶⁵ The map was published for the first time with his inventory of Mesoamerican pictorial documents.

¹⁶⁴ Boban, 1891.

¹⁶⁵ Glass, 1975.

Recently, a complete description of the manuscript's contents and transcription of the glosses were provided by Rincón.¹⁶⁶

The Plan topographique was prepared in November of 1580 under the direction of Gonzalo Velázquez de Lara, the *corregidor* for Ixcatlan, who had also prepared the *relación geográfica* the previous year. He did so in response to an inquiry which was filed with the judicial system by the cacique of the community. Whereas the *relación* was executed with European artistic techniques,¹⁶⁷ the Plan topographique is done in the traditional, prehispanic fashion. We can assume that a native cartographer was employed to make the colored rendering.

The community of Ixcatlan is clearly depicted in the upper right hand corner of the Plan topographique. A church serves as its symbol. A ball of cotton at the base of the structure provides the reader with the interpretation of the place sign as Ixcatlan. The gloss in Spanish above the church reads "This is the church and town of Yxcatlan." Two individuals are seated in front of the church. These figures represent a married couple and are shown in typical Mixtec style with their calendrical names. The male seated on the throne is Lord 11 Reed. His wife, Lady 7 Ocelot, joins him on the woven mat. Rincón believes that these personages are most likely the founders of the royal lineage of Ixcatlan, whose remains were preserved and worshiped by the members of the community prior to conquest.¹⁶⁸ His conclusion, however, does not seem probable. There would have been no purpose for the author of the manuscript to show the origin of the ruling family line and not relate them to those who held authority in 1580. Neither would he have had reason to depict the two most important deities of the old religion at the site of the newly erected church. Don Juan de Santiago had been recognized as the

¹⁶⁶ Rincón, 1996a.

¹⁶⁷ Mundy, 1996.

¹⁶⁸ Rincón, 1996.

cacique of Ixcatlan two years earlier.¹⁶⁹ He and his wife, Marta de Guzmán, were the patrons of the community. Their portraits are certainly the ones seen on the Plan topographique, as suggested by Caso.¹⁷⁰

Two other towns appear on the map. Coixtlahuaca is in the upper left hand corner with the explanation “This is the church of Cuestlahuaca.” The native hieroglyph for the toponym, Plain of the Snake, is shown in association with the church there. The church at the lower left is San Miguel Guautla. The caption in Spanish says “This is the town and *cabecera* of Guautla, said site and seat that is on the other side of the *mojoneras* of the town Yxcatlan.”

The Plan topographique also depicts the settlement of Axumulco. The accompanying text records “This is the site of Axumulco, where they have populated the *estancia* that was once again peopled by order of the excellent viceroy Don Myn Enriquez.” The repopulation of this site was accomplished by moving the residents from a nearby settlement that is shown on the map. The gloss with this unnamed hillside location comments “this is the site where the Indians that at present are residents of the newly populated *estancia* of Axumulco. They were before at the foot of a mountain a distance of one league from one site to the other. These said Indians are subjects of Ixcatlan.”

Individuals from an area outside the boundary of the Ixcatec cacicazgo were also seeking to inhabit Axumulco. They can be seen in the lower left corner of the manuscript. Above the drawing of their homes scattered across the hills, the text explains “This is the site where the thirteen Indians from Guautla intend to inhabit the lands of Axumulco.”

¹⁶⁹ SRA Expediente 276.1/307.

¹⁷⁰ Caso, 1979.

The plan shows a stream of water that begins in Guautla and flows north into Ixcatec territory. The text beside a large tree reads “from here the water departs.” There are, in fact, springs in the Guautla valley which give origin to a river. Just inside the boundary of Ixcatlan, this course of water is joined by the Río Sabino, which also originates from springs located about two kilometers east of Ixcatlan. From this juncture the river is known as the Río Vela. It continues north, passing below the community of San Pedro Nodón. This settlement is set in a small basin on the side of a mountain just east of the river. The map depicts two other streams joining the river from the east. The first of these may be depicting the natural course of spring water which emerges from the hillside just below Nodón. Today the water from the springs are channeled in irrigation ditches that crisscross the slope and make agricultural production possible. Just north of Nodón, another permanent stream runs down from the high ground to merge with the river below. This is the Río Zapato. Further downstream, another tributary joins the Río Vela from the west. The map indicates that this stream has its origin well inside Ixcatec country. I suspect that this is the Río Seco, an intermittent stream that flows primarily during the rainy season. The Río Vela eventually flows down out of the steep ravines of the Mixteca Alta and into the Río Alvarado in the Cuicatlan Cañada.

It seems certain that Axumulco, the focus of the court case which generated this map, is located in the proximity of San Pedro Nodón. According to the notation on the manuscript, this site was populated by citizens of Ixcatlan who were relocated from an unnamed settlement one league to the east by order of the Viceroy Miguel Enriquez. The document implies that this area had been populated before.

There are very few records which elucidate the history of the Nodón area. Though it appears to have been settled before the preparation of *Relación geográfica* of Ixcatlan in 1579, it is not mentioned in that manuscript or depicted in the accompanying

map. This may be because it was just in the process of being resettled, or was considered too small of a rancho to warrant such attention. This is in spite of the fact that a church is shown at the site in 1580.

The church illustrated on the map must correspond to the colonial chapel constructed high on the ridge at San Pedro Viejo and then abandoned in 1719.¹⁷¹ The suggestion by Rincón¹⁷² that the structure depicted represents the church at the former sujeto of San Juan Coyula is geographically impossible. Coyula is well west of the Río Nodón, seven kilometers north of San Pedro. Axumulco cannot be San Pedro Viejo. There are only a few possible inhabitable sites on the hillside between the colonial church and the river. The most suitable is the one where Nodón is situated today. One must conclude that Axumulco originally occupied the small basin where San Pedro Nodón is today (Figures 58 and 59).

The first mention of Nodón appears in the formal possession of lands which was conducted for the cacique of Ixcatlan in 1743.¹⁷³ In the course of delineating the boundary of the cacicazgo, one of the markers mentioned is the old village of San Pedro Nodón. The ruins of the church and adjoining settlement, above the community's present location, served as the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Guautla, and Jocotipac. This site is still known to the inhabitants of Nodón today, although there are no longer any physical remains at the location. The only description of Nodón from the period is found in the *relación geográfica* that was prepared in 1778.¹⁷⁴ While still an *agencia* of Ixcatlan, it was administered from the curate of Santiago Apoala and appears in the *relación* which was written by the friars there. They mention that the former location of San Pedro

¹⁷¹ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, legajo 30

¹⁷² Rincón, 1996a.

¹⁷³ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, legajo 30

¹⁷⁴ Esparza, 1994.

Nodón was abandoned some seventy years earlier in favor of a site lower down the mountain. Shortly after this time, in 1808, Nodón claims to be *republica de indios* and “so old that there is no memory of its origin.” It petitions to have its *fundo legal* enlarged, arguing that the arable land available for the support of the community is too small to adequately support the population.¹⁷⁵ This request was ultimately denied. Even so, it appears that Nodón, by this time, had freed itself from Ixcatlan. Later documents would claim that the land it held was generously donated by the Ixcatec. Independence as a community was relatively shorted lived for Nodón. On September 30, 1880 it was transferred from the jurisdiction of the District of Nochixtlan and added to that of Coixtlahuaca, where it was made an *agencia* subject to the *cabecera*.¹⁷⁶ In 1995 Nodón became an *agencia* of Cuicatlan, even though it is not contiguous with that municipio.

The interest in Nodón seems to be centered in its resources, as limited as they might be. Most of the terrain there is steep and rocky and of little agricultural value. However, the hillside below the modern community has ample water and the warmer climate need to grow tropical fruits. The area produces avocados, bananas, oranges and limes, mangos, papayas, and zapote, even sugar cane at the lower elevations. These crops are not available elsewhere in the Mixteca Alta and are usually imported from the Cañada. The slopes of the Río Vela valley below Nodón offer a verdant and productive contrast to the barren slopes which rise above.

Rincón has suggested that the inquiry which produced the 1580 map was initiated by Ixcatlan in support of a plan to import Mixtec from Guautla and allow them to settle among the Ixcatec at Axumulco.¹⁷⁷ This, he says, was done by the cacique of Ixcatlan in an effort to repopulate the decimated community and keep it economically viable, even at

¹⁷⁵ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, legajo 30.

¹⁷⁶ *Colección de leyes*

¹⁷⁷ Rincón, 1996.

the cost of bringing in foreigners. However, the document clearly states that the thirteen Guautecos had not moved into Axumulco, but that they merely “intend” to do so. It is much more plausible that the cacique of Ixcatlan had the boundaries specified and the location of Axumulco verified to defend his lands from invasion of the Mixtec. He wished to use the court proceedings to counter their unwelcome advances into this productive region. The occupation by outsiders of any territory within the boundaries of Ixcatlan would alienate the land from the community. Ownership would pass from Ixcatlan to Guautla.

One of the main elements of the document is a series of eight hieroglyphic place signs which are connected by what appears to be a jaguar pelt. The practice of delineating the border of a cacicazgo with the jaguar skin is also found on the three sixteenth-century lienzos of Coixtlahuaca.¹⁷⁸ Each of the signs designates the name of a boundary marker along the frontier between Ixcatlan and its neighbors. From top to bottom (or west to east) these glyphs are glossed as *Tecpaostoq* (Palace Cave), *Apetlazingo* (Small Water Mat), *Suchiquilpa* (On the Edible Flower), *Teponaguastepec* (Guaje Drum Hill), *Estleostoque* (Red or Blood Cave), *Tepetitlan* (Adjacent to or below the Hill), *Gueytepetl* (Great Hill) and *Xaxocoteptl* (Guava Hill).

The *corregidor* indicates in the text on the back of the map that he walked the boundary line and saw the markers as part of his preparation of the document. Each of the *mojoneras* was known to the informants from Ixcatlan, as well as their counterparts from Guautla. Unfortunately, the Nahuatl names are not understood by the inhabitants of the area today. These toponyms were probably used only by a handful of interpreters for official proceedings, where nahuatl was required. The next official boundary survey for

¹⁷⁸ Glass, 1975.

the cacicazgo of Ixcatlan was conducted in 1743.¹⁷⁹ At this time, the names of the *mojoneras* on the line which delimits Ixcatlan from Tequixtepec, Coixtlahuaca, and Guautla are either in Ixcatec, Chocho, or Mixtec, the languages native to the area. They do not correspond to the Nahuatl names recorded in 1580, making their identification difficult.

During the colonial period, when Nodón was still a part of the Ixcatec cacicazgo, one of the *mojoneras* that established the boundary with Guautla, as we have already seen, was San Pedro Viejo. Not far from this location, on land which now belongs to Guautla, there is a cave that is well known to the people of Nodón. It is called “Siete puertas”, or Seven doors, because it has several openings. This cave is in the general location of Estleostoque as it appears on the plan topographique, just east of the river. I suspect that Siete puertas may have been Estleostoque.

Across the river to the west of Axumulco, the next *mojonera* on the 1580 map is Teponaguastepec. One might expect that this point on the boundary line was located somewhere on the vast slopes of Murillo, the large mountain that dominates the landscape south of Ixcatlan and serves as the frontier between the community and its neighbors in Guautla and Coixtlahuaca.

The old Ixcatec frontier north of Axumulco must have extended, as it does today, down the Río Vela, as the river is called below, and followed its course through a steep canyon, dropping quickly to join the Río Grande. This boundary was shared with Jocotipac and Cuicatlan. The *mojoneras* Gueytepetl and Xaxocotepetl were probably located somewhere along the route. The geography of this region and the names of its topographic features are virtually unknown. While it is true, as Rincón notes, that the

¹⁷⁹ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, Legajo 30.

mojoneras have changed over the course of time,¹⁸⁰ there is no evidence in the documents of Ixcatlan to suggest that the boundary lines themselves were modified to any great extent until the twentieth century.

LIENZO DE IXCATLAN (SELER I)

The most enigmatic of the early maps from Ixcatlan is the Lienzo Selser I. The document was collected by Edward Selser, the noted German Mesoamericanist, in 1897 during his second expedition into Mexico.¹⁸¹ At this time the lienzo, along with a lienzo from Coixtlahuaca (Selser II), was in the possession of Manuel Martinez Gracida, a well-known Oaxacan historian. He was working at the Secretaria de Estadística in Mexico City when he brought them to Selser's attention. Selser returned to Berlin with the documents. The lienzo of Coixtlahuaca was placed in the Museum für Volkerkunde where it remains today. The Ixcatec document was kept at the Selser home in nearby Steglitz.¹⁸² He may have planned to prepare and publish an analysis of the lienzo. Selser asked a student, Walter Lehman, to prepare a copy of the pictorial manuscript. Lehman also made a small sketch of the map and a few notes concerning its contents before returning the original to Selser (Figure 60). During World War II a bomb completely destroyed the Selser family residence and all its contents, presumably the Lienzo of Ixcatlan, as well. All that survives are the notations made by Selser, Martinez Gracida, and Lehman. The small sketch prepared by Lehman was not rediscovered until 1994, when it was located among his papers at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut in Berlin.¹⁸³

Lehman's map shows twelve locations marked by symbols. The place signs bear the letters A through M (J is not utilized), which might have referred to a key for

¹⁸⁰ Rincón, 1996a.

¹⁸¹ Rincón, 1996b.

¹⁸² Swanton and Doesburg, 1996.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

interpreting the names of the sites that no longer exists. Two other locations are represented by crosses. They are labeled as Santa María Ixcatlan and Nopala. Three locations appear to be pre-Columbian structures. The palaces of F and G and a pyramid at site H. The remainder of the symbols are hill signs, with the exception of L which is clearly a cave. The lettered place signs are connected by lines and arrows. The arrows appear to indicate a progression or movement between the sites. The arrows begin at the cave L. The direction of travel then moves through points C, B, and K. Here the line bifurcates. One route moves on to D and then terminates at M, Nopala. The other path leads from K to H and then crosses the map to point E. At this juncture the points of departure are numerous. One path leads directly to Nopala, site M; another leads north off the map. The third follows the top margin of the map back towards Ixcatlan before fragmenting into numerous routes which lead East.

In his brief analysis of Lehman's sketch, Rincon identifies the cave labeled L with the well-known site of Puente de Rosario in the municipio of Tepelmeme.¹⁸⁴ He notes the general proximity of this natural bridge to Nopala. He also suggests that this cave is the one mentioned in the *relación geográfica* as being the origin for the name of Ixcatlan. He also postulates that the Ixcatec may have used this lienzo to further its claims in the dispute over San Gerónimo on the Xuquila.

The first observation I would make is that Cave L is located on the Ixcatlan side, or south, of Nopala. The natural bridge at Rosario is located a considerable distance from Nopala across the Río Xuquila. This feature has never been considered as part of any lands claimed by Ixcatlan. It should also be noted that the original cotton fields mentioned in the *relación geográfica* were also called Temascalapa.¹⁸⁵ This location

¹⁸⁴ Rincón, 1996b.

¹⁸⁵ JGI XXIV-7

would later be known as San Antonio Temascalapa. It was located near Nopala. While no one in Ixcatlan recognizes the name Temascalapa today, there is a site not far from Nopala that is still called San Antonio. If Cave L is the important historical site of the *relación geográfica*, it is much more likely that it is in the vicinity of San Antonio than on the Río Rosario in Tepelmeme.

The notes made by Seler and Lehmann about the contents of the Lienzo de Ixcatlan indicated that the document also depicted historical scenes and individuals. There were as many as thirty three calendrical dates that appeared as glosses on the map. These were written in Chocho, rather than Ixcatec. Many were preceded by *yncha*, which can be translated as “noble.” Lord 11 Reed and Lady 7 Jaguar, the royal couple seen on the Plan topographique d’Ixcatlan, may be among these. Six pairs of year signs and day names were also discernable on the document.¹⁸⁶ The Lienzo de Ixcatlan clearly belonged to the genre of large, complex lienzos that were numerous in the Coixtlahuaca region and elsewhere in Oaxaca.¹⁸⁷

CACICAZGO LAND GRANTS

The original records which reflect the grants of land issued to the caciques of Ixcatlan are preserved in the Municipal Archives of Santa María Ixcatlan. Transcriptions of some of these historical documents can also be found in the archives of the Secretaria de Reforma Agraria.¹⁸⁸ These copies were made by the Paleography Section of the agency as part of the paperwork submitted to resolve the issues of land reform that developed during the twentieth century.

The first formal grants of land given by the Spanish administration to the cacicazgo of Ixcatlan were offered to Don Juan de Santiago by the Viceroy Lorenzo de

¹⁸⁶ Swanton and Doesburg, 1996

¹⁸⁷ Boone, 2000.

¹⁸⁸ SRA Expediente 276.1/304 (723.1) and (723.7).

Mendoza de Suarez on August 30, 1582. The parcel consisted of a *sitio de ganado menor* in the place called Yaguacapulpan. Permission was also given for the cacique to have 500 head of sheep or goats on the land. It is difficult to say where Yaguacapulpan is located with total certainty, as the toponym does not survive, per se. There is, however a Cañada Capulin which preserves some of the semantics in the name given to the site. It is located in the wooded highlands near Gandudo. It may well have been within the territory given to Don Juan de Santiago.

Unfortunately for the cacique, he died before he could take official possession of the land. On June 3, 1588, the *corregidor* Diego de Angelo Enríques presided at the ceremony of possession on behalf of Juan Vásquez, who had inherited his father's rights to the site just a few months before. The *corregidor* escorted the young boy to the land. Don Juan Vásquez then performed the necessary rites by throwing rocks and pulling up plants to show his ownership after no opposition was expressed to the cacique's possession by those who were present.

The cacicazgo landholdings would quickly grow in the next sixty years. Baltazar de Santiago received a grant on May 31, 1616. The Marqués de Guadalcázar granted another *sitio de ganado menor*¹⁸⁹ and permission to graze 400 head of sheep in Teponahuastepec Ixtlahuacan. An additional two *cabellerías*¹⁹⁰ of land were given to be cultivated by the cacique. Under the direction of the *corregidor* Macario de Anzures, Don Baltazar threw rocks and pulled up plants to signal his possession on June 15, 1616.

The record of the transaction relates that the land of Teponahuastepec Ixtlahuacan bordered on Tequistepec. The Nahua name is not known to or used by the Ixcatec today, but does appear in other historical documents from the community. They indicate that

¹⁸⁹ A *sitio de ganado menor* contains 776 hectares or 1,918 acres.

¹⁹⁰ A *caballería* is 42.5 hectares or 105 acres.

the site was located along the ridge between Gandudo and Cerro Flor. This would put it in the vicinity of Lorqueta or Loma Guaje, at the western end of the Ixcatlan Valley, on the boundary line shared with Tequixtepec. The two *cabellerías* to be planted could have been in the upland; as well, and even contiguous to the lands of Yaguacapulan. The *cabellerías* could just as easily been, however, in the valley itself, below the hills on the Llano Grande. These fields are still cultivated by the Ixcatec.

The cacicazgo would take on completely new proportions during 1636. Melchor de los Reyes, the cacique of Tepelmeme, was married to María de Guzman, the daughter of Don Baltazar. Acting in behalf of his wife's young brothers, "Juan and Miguel de Santiago, caciques of Ixcatlan," he purchased a half *cabellería* in the place known as Mesquititlan from Juan Monjaras, the cacique of Quiotepec. The price paid for the land is 172 pesos. The sale was approved by the Alcalde Mayor and final permission conceded by the Viceroy February 18, 1636. The land is located along the banks of the Río Salado. The river serves as its boundary with Tecomavaca to the east.

The acquisition of land in *tierra caliente* gives the cacicazgo of Ixcatlan access to a year-round growing season and a permanent water supply. There one is capable of producing two crops of corn annually and a variety of tropical fruits. The only disadvantage is its distance from Ixcatlan.

The viceroy also granted to the caciques Melchor, Juan and Miguel the plots of land known as Ndanquiyaya and Ndanan, along with permission for 200 horses and 200 head of cattle. The rights to these lands were confirmed by the *corregidor* of Cuicatlan, Marcial de Cubiyas. The formal ceremony of possession was held on October 16, 1641, complete with the customary throwing of rocks and pulling of plants. Ndanquiyaya is described as being along the road to Tecomavaca and Quiotepec and where the river rises to San Juan Coyula.

At the same time another order of possession issued by the Marquez was executed. It gave the caciques of Ixcatlan the Puerto de Dañan and lands in Dangague and Canduduidecayano Nocuaa. These sites are said to be along the road to Coixtlahuaca, as well as that which travels down to Xuquila and San Antonio Nanahuatipan.

The generous grants extended by the viceroy to the native royal family gave it control of a significant amount of property. The cacicazgo had been established as a major player in the livestock industry with rights to raise cattle, horses and sheep. The land holdings extended from the valley of the *cabecera* to the Río Xuquila and the Río Salado. The grants provided the cacique's family the ability to utilize the resources of several ecological zones.

With its new economic power, the cacicazgo must have reached a pinnacle of influence and status. The descendants of Melchor and María, who inherited the enlarged holdings, would marry into the noble families of Quiotepec and Suchixtlahuaca to further solidify their position.

The Possession of 1743

By order of the Audiencia Real a formal possession of the lands pertaining to the cacicazgo of Ixcatlan was conducted by the *Alcaldia mayor* of Cuicatlan and Papalo.¹⁹¹ On the first day of April 1743, Don Francisco Montañes, *Teniente general* to the *Alcalde mayor*, met with Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar. They were joined in this action by the required witnesses, including representatives from the neighboring villages. The boundary survey began at the summit of Gandudo, where a cross served to mark the boundary between the territories of Tepelmeme, Tequixtepec and the cacique of Ixcatlan. The informant also indicated that this place was called Cutaxha. The

¹⁹¹ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, Legajo 30

authorities of the two neighboring communities were asked if they agreed with possession of the lands east of this point by Don Francisco de Santiago. With their consent, the *Teniente* took the cacique of Ixcatlan by the hand, escorted him through the site and granted him all legal right to it. To complete the ceremony, the cacique then pulled up grass, threw rocks and broke tree limbs. This ritual would be performed at every location visited during the *vista de ojos*.

Don Francisco de Salazar then requested to examine the lands at Ixtlahuacan, next to Teponagustepec, which were granted his family in 1616. Upon the arrival of the survey party at the site, which must be on the slopes of Gandudo, Don Antonio de Córdova, the governor of Tequixtepec, testified that he recognized the right of the Ixcatec cacique to the two *cabellerias de tierra* and a *sitio de ganado menor* in that location. He also verified that they bordered his community. There being none present who had any objection, the dominion of Don Francisco de Salazar was ceremoniously awarded possession by the representative of the *Acalde mayor*.

The next point confirmed as a boundary between Ixcatlan and Tequixtepec was Catagasu, a short distance on a direct line south of Gandudo. Again a cross marked the location. Possession of the lands was extended to Don Francisco. Known today as Cotagasu, the site is a small *tecoyuco*¹⁹² on the western slope of the Gandudo ridge. It is not presently utilized as a boundary marker, but it is only a few yards east of the present clearing which establishes the current boundary between the two communities.

From Catagasu the survey party was directed to Palo Solo, or Cuundurn in Chocho. The location was so named because of a large oak tree which stood on the site. Hearing no testimony to the contrary, the officiating authority ordered that a cross be cut

¹⁹² A depression in a rock which collects rainwater.

in the trunk of the tree with a machete to indicate the boundary. He then gave possession of the land to Don Francisco de Salazar and Ixcatlan.

The final point of the western limit of the cacicazgo was El Mirador, also known as Cuunducateu in Chocho. This point served as the *punto trino*¹⁹³ between Ixcatlan, Tequixtepec, and Coixtlahuaca. El Mirador is a treeless plain that runs along a ridge which serves as a natural geographic separation between Tequixtepec and Ixcatlan. The modern mojonera at El Mirador is located on the slope just east of the road which runs along the ridge overlooking the Escate Valley.

The following day, the concerned parties met at La Cañada del Clavo, just below the Ixcatec side of El Mirador, to continue their work. From this location they went east, climbing the slopes of El Murillo, until they reached a cross which was next to the trail that linked Coixtlahuaca and Guautla. This boundary marker was not named, nevertheless there was no dissenting opinion to its identifying the lands belonging to the cacicazgo of Ixcatlan and Don Francisco de Salazar was granted possession. The next location visited was Nuumnatahancgua, a site some distance east, above the cliffs overlooking the Río Guautla. It was agreed by all the representatives of the various communities that the cross there separated holdings of the Ixcatec cacique from those of Guautla and Nodón, a relatively new settlement which had been established on the land controlled by Don Francisco de Salazar.

The group then crossed the river and climbed up the steep slopes on the other side, until they reached the site of San Pedro Viejo. This was the location of Nodón before the population moved down to its present setting. There, behind the ruins of the old church, was a rock structure that served as the *mojonera* between Ixcatlan, Guautla and Jocotipac. To continue the process, the survey walked down the slopes to the north

¹⁹³ A boundary point shared by three entities.

where they encountered the path that connected Nodón and Jocotipac. In this place called Totonono, another cross served as the frontier between Ixcatlan and Jocotipac. This was the eastern most extension of Ixcatlan.

From Totonono, high in the mountains of the Mixteca, the boundary line proposed by Don Francisco de Salazar ran down the Río Vela and extended to Quiotepec El Viejo, on the banks of the Río Alvarado. To make the journey, the group met at the Río Seco in Ixcatlan on April 3, 1743. After proceeding to Quiotepec El Viejo they were joined by Joachin de Monjaras, the cacique of Quiotepec and other officials from that community. They agreed to recognize this point as a boundary between the two cacicazgos.

The vista de ojos followed the camino real to the *paraje* know as Nahoturhec, where representatives of Tecomavaca awaited. With the consent of all involved, a cross was erected to serve as a boundary marker until a permanent one of rock and plaster could be constructed. The frontier separating Ixcatlan and Tecomavaca continued north up the Río Salado until it reached Joyuga. This point also served to distinguish the boundary of land belonging to Ixcatlan, the Jesuite trapiche of San Nicolas Ayotla, and the holdings of Don Domingo Narvaes, the cacique of Los Cues. From there the survey followed the river to Alcalaqui. Here the waters of the Río Xuquila flow into the Río Salado.

Still headed north along the banks of the Río Salado, the survey was directed to land named Cuyuluapa. Don Francisco de Salazar claimed three caballerías of land in this location on the west side of the Río Salado. The northern extension of Cuyuluapa was indicated to be the Río Calapa, where it shared a border with San Antonio Nanahuatipac. Don Manuel de Chavez, the cacique of that community, was present to verify the claim of the Ixcatec to this property and possession was granted to Don Francisco de Salazar.

The party then returned to the Río Xuquila and followed its course to Santa Cruz, a deserted settlement. The landmarks passed along the way were Binditeo, indicated by a pictograph of “a person appearing to be an Indian” and Totoltepec. The land of Santa Cruz, though no longer inhabited, contained two groves of fruit trees which belonged to Don Francisco de Salazar. Again the cacique of Nanahuatipac testified in his behalf and recognized his ownership.

The work of surveying the land for Don Francisco left the Río Xuquila the next day and made the arduous climb back into the highlands. Their first destination was San Miguel Nopala, another of the former *sujetos* of Ixcatlan. The scribed noted that the ruins of the old settlement served to separate Nanahuatipac and Tepelmeme from Ixcatlan. From Nopala they traveled towards Gandudo, the point where the survey had begun several days before. In so doing they encountered Nazu, flower hill. Ixcatec informants tell me that this site is located in the pass between Montañita and Gaandudo, right where the trail from Nopala comes out of the Cañada Colorada. Today this area is called Loma del Terrero Guadalupe after a man by that name who once worked the land. It was once called Nazu because there was a stone with a flower carved on it at that location. The carving was removed from the site and brought into Ixcatlan over fifty years ago. For quite some time it sat in the old municipal building, but has since disappeared.

Having circumnavigated the community and verified its boundaries, the survey party headed back to town. Before descending into the valley of Ixcatlan, they paused in the mountains to confirm the possession of Don Francisco de Salazar to the grants of two *sitios de ganado mayor* that had been given to the cacicazgo by the viceroy in 1636. With this land his family had permission to have two hundred horses and two hundred cows.

The final task of the *vista de ojo* was to confirm upon Don Francisco de Salazar his rights to the homestead and plot he held in town. The cacique's house was located on a piece of property known as Teepam. It is believed by the Ixcatec today that this site was on the hillside above the road that exits the community towards Tecomavaca, just behind the current location of the Presidencia municipal. In the process of the formal possession, the house was evacuated, its door and windows shut. Dr. Francisco then reopened the house and welcomed the visitors back into the house. The cacique was also granted possession to a *solar* which was apparently located just below his home. It was bordered on the south by the cemetery behind the church.

There is a map preserved in the municipal archives of Ixcatlan that appears to reflect the holdings of the cacicazgo at this time (Figure 61). There are several notable differences in the names given to the boundary markers. Many of the toponyms from the *vista de ojos* of 1743 appear on the map in Spanish translation. One major error in nomenclature is the appearance of a *mojonera* called "3 divisiones" twice along the southern boundary between the Mirador and San Pedro Viejo. The map includes the land owned by the cacique north of the Río Xuquila. It appears as a small triangle outside the square periphery of Ixcatlan bordering Ayotla. This property will later be sold off and not included in subsequent boundary surveys.

The possession granted to Don Francisco de Salazar was instrumental for preserving not only the cacicazgo, but the community, as well. As the colonial period came to a close, the rights of the cacique of Ixcatlan were transferred to the Ixcatec people. The documents of the noble family have served as the *titulos primodiales* of the village. They are still the basis for claiming rights over the land today.

Chapter 5: Ixcatlan and the *Ley Lerdo*

With the independence of Mexico from Spain the *Repúblicas de indios* were abolished. Santa María Ixcatlan was organized as a *municipio* under the precepts of the 1825 constitution of the State of Oaxaca. The community was made part of the *Partido* (later *Departamento*) of Teposcolula. Jurisdiction was transferred to Teotitlan del Camino in 1848, where it remains today.

The founders of the Mexican nation made some attempt at privatizing the communal lands held by the *municipios*. Continuing the ideals established by the Bourbon Reforms and the Corte de Cadiz, provisions for the distribution of public lands were included in Article 155 of the Constitution of 1827. By acquiring individual property, it was thought, Indians would become true citizens. Despite the lawmakers strong feelings against communal landholdings, few cases for the acquisition of land ever developed.¹⁹⁴

By 1849, several states, driven by economic concerns, passed legislation to end the rights of communities to hold property.¹⁹⁵ The government of President Benito Juárez advanced the liberal cause. The law of June 25, 1856, also known as the *Ley Lerdo*, was enacted as part of the Reform Movement. Named for Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, the Minister of the Treasury, the decree authorized the sale of properties held by civil corporations, including municipalities and the church, to their tenants. The price of the property was to be based on the amount of rent being paid by the individual. Tenants were given priority to acquire the land over a three month time period. Thereafter, any

¹⁹⁴ Hale, 1968.

¹⁹⁵ Tutino, 1986.

unclaimed property could be denounced. The real estate would then be sold at public auction.¹⁹⁶

The law first appeared in the capital of Oaxaca on July 3 and the regulations for its implementation were published by the state government on July 30, 1856. Considerable interest was generated in the urban area of the capital. The large haciendas were the first to be adjudicated. The process slowed as smaller properties were purchased over the next months. Then on October 3, the last day of the initial phase, 191 pieces of real estate changed ownership. By 1867 a total of 1,436 properties were disentailed by the *Ley Lerdo* in Oaxaca.¹⁹⁷

The effect of the law in Ixcatlan was much different. Only one case for desmortification was adjudicated. Three citizens of San Pedro Nodón presented an application to the court at Teotitlan del Camino on October 31, 1856. They claimed to be renting lands in Ixcatlan and sought to acquire the property under the Law of May 25, 1856. Gregorio Miguel, Policárpio López and Leocadio Sánchez said they had paid for the pasturing of their animals on the *parajes* of Tejocote, Garantilla, and Carrizal since 1853. The case was administered by the sub-prefect of Coixtlahuaca, José Manuel Martínez. Representatives of Ixcatlan produced receipts to demonstrate that the payment of rent had ended in December of 1855. The *alcalde*, Marcelino Gómez, affirmed in a deposition that the residents of Nodón were asked to vacate the property at that time and removed their animals. Given the evidence, a ruling was issued in favor of Ixcatlan on March 5, 1857 and possession of the land was denied to the petitioners from San Pedro Nodón.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Berry, 1981.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones, Legajo 4, expediente 36.

Records of any further attempts to acquire the corporate holdings of Ixcatlan have not been located. No citizen of the community itself made an application for adjudication under the *Ley Lerdo*. The population of Ixcatlan seemed content to respect the traditional form of communal land control. There were no haciendas and little church property. It is doubtful that the Ixcatec felt alienated from the land.

The experience of neighboring Santo Domingo Tepelmeme was quite similar. Individuals from San Pedro Tetitlan had been renting property along the Río Hondo and requested adjudication. They had stopped paying rent, however. The community leaders decided to offer the 53 small tracts to local residents, rather than the outsiders, and thus maintain their dominion over the real estate.¹⁹⁹

Throughout rural Mexico the reaction to the land policies of the reform was stubborn and slow. Village leaders and peasants shared a common interest in defending and maintaining communal control. Away from the urban centers the *Ley Lerdo* did not have the desired effect. Efforts to enforce it in the hinterlands only brought resistance and even revolt.²⁰⁰

Governmental efforts to privatize lands may have motivated Ixcatlan to prepare a map of the municipio in 1870 (Figure 62). The original document is still in the municipal archives of the community, but its published version is well known.²⁰¹ This map was definitely modeled the undated map which was discussed earlier. Once again the territory of Ixcatlan is shown as a rectangle with the named *mojoneras* depicted around the border.

Despite the reluctance of the populace to embrace the privatization of corporate lands the government kept insisting. The State of Oaxaca published a steady stream of

¹⁹⁹ Mendoza Garcia, 1997.

²⁰⁰ Tutino, 1986.

²⁰¹ Hoppe and Weitlander, 1969.

reminders asking that land be adjudicated in accordance with the law. Then on June 26, 1890 a new provision for the partitioning of communal property was issued.²⁰² José Cruz Bautista, the *Presidente municipal* of Ixcatlan responded to the new regulation on September 1. He submitted a request for a survey of community land holdings to the *Jefe político* of Teotitlan del Camino. To justify their needs for these lands, Ixcatlan presented a list of 227 pieces of property that were held by 121 of its citizens.²⁰³

The survey of Ixcatec lands was directed by Francisco Villaseñor. The various representatives and witnesses assembled on November 16, 1891 and traveled to Gandudo to begin their work. (Figure 63) On the summit of the peak they encountered three crosses which were identified as the boundary markers between Ixcatlan, Tepelmeme and Tequixtepec. Marcelino Jiménez, the *Presidente municipal* of Tepelmeme, agreed with the testimony given by the witnesses from Ixcatlan. The representative from San Miguel Tequixtepec failed to appear as the proceedings were initiated that day and did not participate in the discussion at Gandudo.

The group was then led to Cotagasu, a short distance from Gandudo, which was identified by the Ixcatec as a point on the frontier they shared with Tequixtepec. No marker was found at the site and it was suggested that the cross which was once there had been destroyed by an unknown party. Although this *mojonera* had been recognized without argument in the survey of 1743, Andres López, the *Presidente municipal* of Tequixtepec, who had now joined the survey in progress, refused to acknowledge Cotagasu. He then directed the members of the survey group to a spot some seven hundred meters away which he called Cundayaxu. He produced witnesses who testified this location designated the division line between his community and Ixcatlan. He also

²⁰² Colección de leyes.

²⁰³ AGEO Repartos y adjudicaciones Legajo 30.

suggested that the rocks which were found in the vicinity were the remnants of a boundary marker. The *Presidente municipal* of Ixcatlan countered that the point designated by the representative of Tequixtepec was situated well into Ixcatec territory and constituted an unwarranted advance by the neighboring community.

Unable to reach any mutual agreement about the second point along the boundary line, the Ixcatec then directed the survey party from Cotagasu a distance of 1,715 meters to Cunduro, or Palo Solo, and stopped at the base of a large tree. Again the representative of Tequixtepec rejected the boundary marker indicated by Ixcatlan and suggested another. Citing the possession of lands granted to their cacique in 1718, he led the group about one thousand meters from the location which had been designated as Cunduro to a place he called Conduche or Yucunduche. There, in a small basin surround by hills, he showed the *Jefe político* a pile of loose rocks. He and his witnesses claimed this was the *mojonera* between Ixcatlan and Tequixtepec.

The Ixcatec were incredulous. They believed the rocks were the remains of some former limestone ovens, long since abandoned, and could not be a boundary marker. *Presidente* Cruz read from the acts of possession that had been executed for Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar and Ixcatlan in 1743. He requested that the passage which described Cuunduro as being a large oak tree along the top of the ridge be entered into evidence. The official accepted the details of the document as verification that the point indicated by Ixcatlan as Cunduro served as the boundary between the two communities. It was assumed that the cross which had been cut into the bark of the tree in 1743 had naturally grown over in the intervening years. Nevertheless, those from Tequixtepec were unconvinced and continued to dispute the designation of this point along the frontier.

From Cunduro the line proposed by Ixcatlan continued on to Cunducater, which is also called El Mirador in Spanish. Again the Municipal President of Tequixtepec refused to recognize this point. The *Jefe político* suggested that he indicate the location his community would prefer, but the invitation was declined. The presiding authority then asked the representatives from the two communities to discuss their differences and try and reach an agreement among themselves. Their efforts were unsuccessful. The four days invested in the survey from Gandudo to El Mirador had failed to provide anything but contention between Ixcatlan and Tequixtepec. The accord concerning the boundary that was shared during the survey of 1743 had completely disintegrated.

The next *mojonera* along the line indicated by Ixcatlan in 1891 was La Cruz, where the community began a common border with Coixtlahuaca. A location of this name is not mentioned in any previous map or survey of Ixcatlan. We would expect Tres Clavos or Tres Divisiones to be the point after El Mirador. If La Cruz does not refer to the site known as Tres Clavos, I am at a loss to explain its appearance here. The geographic features of La Cruz are not mentioned in the text, making its identification difficult, if it is distinct. It could not be officially recognized at this time because a representative of San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca was not present.

The group then proceeded to La Cruz de la Cumbre on the summit of El Murillo. Again the process of formally including this location into the action of the survey was hampered by the lack of representation from Coixtlahuaca. After pausing briefly, the survey party made the long trek across Murillo to Nanatacahua. In 1743 this *mojonera* had been located on top of the cliffs above the river which descended from Guautla. Now it was placed at the bottom of this prominent feature, along the banks of the stream. Leonardo Rames, the *Agente municipal* of San Pedro Nodón, preferred to call this point

Agua Encontrada, but all agreed that it was the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Nodón, and Guautla.

The division line traced by the representatives of Ixcatlan climbed from the river bottom up to San Pedro Viejo. They recognized the modern claim of inhabitants of Nodón to this location as a *mojonera* they shared with Guautla and Jocotipac. Nevertheless this point was included in the survey because these lands had once belonged to Ixcatlan. Now independent, Nodón still had to look to documental support from Ixcatlan for its territorial claims.

From the ruins of San Pedro Viejo the frontier between Nodón and Jocotipac descended to Totonoño, or Piedra del Zapato, and then down to the Río Vela. Here the river makes a big turn to the west in front of a large cliff face. Nodón referred this geographic feature La Peña del Gavilán and indicated that it established the end of its land holdings. The Ixcatec testified that the western extension of the territory they had ceded to Nodón was limited by the course of the river from this point to Nanatacagua or Agua Encontrada. The citizens of Nodón refused to recognize this section of the boundary indicated by Ixcatlan, saying that it had never been officially established. The Municipal President of Ixcatlan responded that his community held the prerogative to set the limits between the two entities, since it was their initiative and generosity to separate land for Nodón in the first place. While Nodón disagreed with the line proposed on this occasion by Ixcatlan, they also admitted that no citizen of their community worked or occupied any lands west of the river, except some acreage rented from Antonio Bautista of Ixcatlan. As part of the documentation, a map of San Pedro Nodón was prepared by the Ixcatec. (Figure 64).

Returning to the Peña del Gavilán, the boundary survey traveled down the west bank of the Río Vela until it merged with the Río Seco. There was no *mojonera* in this

location, but it was presented as the limit of Ixcatec lands with those of Jocotipac. The Municipal President of Jocotipac concurred. The party then proceeded down the Río Seco and arrived at the location known as Paraje Blanco on a small rise above the river bed. This toponym does not appear in any of the previous communal surveys. Despite the absence of a boundary marker, the Ixcatec witnesses indicated that this site established the frontier of their community with the Trapiche de los Obos. Benjamin Regules, representing the plantation, agreed with the testimony concerning Paraje Blanco.

The group then followed the road that connected Tecomavaca with Cuicatlan, forded the Río Grande and climbed up to the ruins of Quiotepec Viejo. The fragments of stone and mortar on the site were interpreted to be the remnants of a *mojonera*. Tomás Vargas, representing the interests inherited from Anselmo Vargas of Quiotepec, however, rejected the idea that Quiotepec Viejo was located on the border between the two communities. He claimed, citing a survey conducted on July 23, 1819, that the site was well inside the lands of Quiotepec. The true boundary marker was Cacalotepec. The Municipal President of Ixcatlan countered this argument with the evidence from the Ixcatec titles. He began by noting that this point was mentioned in the possession granted to the cacique Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar in 1743. He also presented the records from the sale that same year of the half *caballería* of land in the *paraje* of Mesquititlan to the Ixcatec cacique by Don Juan de Monjaras, the cacique of Quiotepec. Finally, he mentioned that this property was adjudicated to Eugenio Salazar of Ixcatlan by the district judge of Teotitlan del Camino in 1880. At the time of this transaction Anselmo Vargas himself had offered testimony in support of the possession by Don Eugenio.

Leaving Quiotepec Viejo the survey continued up the east side of the Río Salado to Nahaturhec, where Ixcatlan shares a *punto trino* with Quiotepec and Tecomavaca. Again the representative of Quiotepec cited his objections to this point of the survey based on the will of Anselmo Vargas. Ixcatlan reiterated the history of their ownership with the manuscript of possession from 1743 and the 1880 court case.

The boundary line outlined by Santa María Ixcatlan followed the course of the Río Salado upstream until it was joined by the Río Xuquila. The witnesses indicated that this location, Alcalahui, marked the frontier of Ixcatlan with Los Cues and the Hacienda of Ayotla. The *agente municipal* of Los Cues, Tibursio Casallido, concurred. Emilio Bolanos Cacho, representing the interests of General Ignacio Mejia, added that Alcalahui also marked the boundary of his clients holdings at Cuautempan, a *rancho* that was part of the Cuyuloapan. He suggested that the actual location of the boundary marker was 450 *varas* south of the confluence of the rivers. The President of Ixcatlan could only remind the *Jefe político* that Alcalahui means “*Junta de los Ríos*”²⁰⁴ and could not logically be anywhere other than the point his community indicated.

At this time President Cruz also explains to the survey party the presence of representatives of General Mejia. He mentions that the borders of Ixcatlan once proceeded from Alcalahui to Cometlapana, Coyuloapan, and Binditeo, but the land circumscribed by these points was sold to Mejia in 1879. He suggests that the present survey should avoid these places and proceed directly to the next relevant site at San Cristobal, since this territory no longer belonged to Ixcatlan and was not pertinent to the current survey.

Mention of lands north of the Río Xuquila belonging to General Mejia, however, brought a protest from Hermenegildo Mendoza y Pacheco, heir to the lands once held as

²⁰⁴ Joining of the rivers.

the cacicazgo of Zapotitlan de Salinas. He claimed that his family records documented their ownership of property that extended as far south as the Río Xuquila and Alcalaqui. (Figure 65) They disputed the rights sought by Mejia to lands that border on Ixcatlan. This disagreement involving Mendoza y Pacheco and Mejia threatened to delay the effort of Ixcatlan to delineate its borders. Eventually the argument became a serious matter which escalated into a battle between the states of Oaxaca and Puebla for domination over the territory between the Río Xuquila and the Río Hondo to the north. The two state governments could not resolve this issue between themselves during the next fifteen years. It was finally decided to ask that President Porfirio Díaz to appoint a federal arbitrator to settle the case. In the end, the judge ruled in favor of Oaxaca and General Mejia.²⁰⁵

After much discussion, the party journeyed west up the Río Xuquila to the formerly inhabited site of San Cristobal. All the witnesses involved agreed with the designation of this location as the limit of Ixcatec lands. The consensus did not include, however, as to who shared the boundary with Ixcatlan at this point. Both Hermenegildo Mendoza y Pacheco and Emilio Bolaños Cacho, in behalf of Ignacio Mejia, continued to protest each other's presence in the proceedings.

The next point along the frontier designated by Ixcatlan is Totoltepec. This location was so named because of a rock formation that has the appearance of a bird on the banks of the Río Xuquila.²⁰⁶ The Ixcatec indicate that they recognize only Nanahuatipac as a neighbor at this marker. None of the representatives of the other communities recognized Totoltepec as a boundary marker at all. Bolaños Cacho claimed that the holdings of General Mejia extend upstream to Paso del Mono. Mendoza y

²⁰⁵ Magro, 1908 and Uriarte y Tamayo, 1908.

²⁰⁶ In the Survey of lands conducted in 1743 it was indicated that a petroglyph rather than a rock formation was responsible for the name of this site.

Pacheco argued that the ex-cacicazgo of Zapotitlan de Salinas owned the land along the Río Xuquila all the way from San Gerónimo to Paso del Mono. With this, Tepelmeme entered the discussion to make its claim to the area west of Paso del Mono, which includes San Gerónimo. After lengthy debate, Ixcatlan conceded that Paso del Mono be recognized as the boundary marker. The distance between it and Totoltepec was not of great significance. While the issue of this particular point in the boundary was eventually solved by the survey, the disagreement among the parties concerning who shared this *mojonera* with Ixcatlan continued to rage.

The Ixcatec guides then took the group to Santa Cruz Viejo. Their indication of this point as a boundary marker drew protests from the representatives of Tepelmeme and Zapotitlan. It was determined that the vestiges of the *mojonera* in this location were nothing more than old house foundations that remained from the former habitation there. This site was rejected and not included in the survey. It had been a boundary marker in the titles of possession granted in 1743 to the cacique of Ixcatlan.

The next point in the boundary was San Miguel Nopala. Tepelmeme was very much in agreement that Nopala was the next *mojonera* along the line that it shared with Ixcatlan. Its representatives did not agree, however, in the location of the site designated as Nopala by the Ixcatec. They showed the survey party another set of ruins they claimed to be Nopala. The witnesses from Ixcatlan insisted that the place shown them by Tepelmeme was called San Antonio Temaxcalli or Temaxcaltepec a former *agencia* of San Miguel Nopala. This locality was well into the territory of Ixcatlan and should not be recognized by the survey. The remnants of an old *mojonera* at Nopala as indicated by Ixcatlan convinced the survey that it should be recognized.

From Nopala the survey party went up the Cañada Colorada to Naxu, which is located in the pass between Gandudo and Montañita. Tepelmeme again disagreed with

the site chosen as Naxu by the Ixcatec, but could offer no alternative. The *Jefe politico*, perhaps tiring from the lengthy proceedings of the survey after two weeks, asked the representatives of Ixcatlan and Tepelmeme to work out their differences. After some discussion, they decided to disagree for the time being and reach an agreement at a later date. The effort of surveying the perimeter of Ixcatlan was concluded by returning to Gandudo on the third of December, 1891.

With this survey of lands the Ixcatec sought to maintain control of their communal lands and still satisfy the requirements of the law. In so doing, they unfortunately generated a substantial amount of conflict with their neighbors. The controversy concerning the limits of the community would continue into the twentieth century and require further arbitration from government agencies.

Chapter 6: Ixcatlan and Agrarian Reform

Porfirio Díaz assumed the office of President for a seventh consecutive term on October 4, 1910. The following day, Francisco I. Madero issued his Plan of San Luis Potosí and initiated revolution against the Díaz dictatorship. The movement was launched with the slogan “Effective suffrage and no re-election.” The popular protest was successful; Díaz resigned May 25, 1911. Francisco León de la Barra became the Provisional President until elections could be held. Madero assumed the Presidency on November 6, 1911, following the general elections in October.²⁰⁷

With the end of the old regime and the restitution of voting rights, the thoughts of some liberal-minded followers pressed for the restitution of the lands which had been lost by countless proprietors of small holdings. Many of the landless were indigenous. The first proposals for agrarian reform were not successful with Madero and his conservative government. The disillusioned and discontented populace, including Emilio Zapata, redirected the revolt with a cry for “Land and Liberty.”²⁰⁸

Formal leadership of the revolution was eventually assumed by Venustiano Carranza, after the hiatus brought by General Victoriano Huerta. He claimed executive power as First Chief of the Constitutional Army on August 22, 1914. Although his objectives may have been only political, Carranza soon took up the cause of land reform. The Plan of Veracruz, offered on December 12, 1914, announced his intentions to “restore communal land unjustly deprived of them, to enact laws which break up the *latifundia* and encourage small rural properties.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Simpson, 1937.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Simpson, 1937:54 and Fabila, 1941.

The first step to bring this ideal to fruition came on January 6, 1915. By decree, Carranza nullified the expropriation of holdings that were executed under the *Ley Lerdo*. The repeal of the law returned control of the land, waters and forests to the *municipios* and their citizens. These precepts of reform were later expounded and incorporated into Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917.²¹⁰

Reaction to the Plan of Veracruz was not immediate in Oaxaca. The first application for land was made by Huamelala, a Chontal community in Tehuantepec, on September 20, 1915. Five other requests were made that year from the coastal regions under Carranista control. It cannot be said, however, that those applications were immediately successful. Seventeen years later, only four of the six were concluded. A fifth was resolved in 1934. Within the first five years of the program, only eleven of one hundred and twenty cases would reach a conclusion. Nationally, only 335 of the 2,079 cases were completed before Carranza's assassination on May 21, 1920.²¹¹

The Agrarian Reform laws of 1917 created a system that could not reach a quick conclusion. Petitions for a land grant were first sent by municipal leaders to the governor of the state. He passed the request on to the Comisión Local Agraria (CLA) for the necessary technical studies, census, data collection, and mapping. It then returned to the governor, who forwarded the paperwork back to the CLA for revision, if required. The document was then given to the community for review. A Comité Particular was formed locally to oversee the process. Their first action was to formally request a provisional possession from the CLA and publication in the *Periódico Oficial del Estado*.²¹²

The file was then transmitted to the Comité Nacional Agraria (CNA) in Mexico City for consideration. Eventually it arrived at the hand of the President, who issued a

²¹⁰ Simpson, 1937.

²¹¹ Arellanes Meixueiro, 1993.

²¹² Arellanes Meixueiro, 1993.

resolución presidencial. His judgement was then published in the *Diario Oficial* by the CNA. The formal documentation returned through the state hierarchy to the local entity. Only then could formal possession be finalized.

There was another major flaw in the system established in 1917. The courts were allowed jurisdiction through litigation over challenges to the *Resoluciones Presidenciales*. Of the approximately 5,500 injunctions sought through 1928, some 3,000 were granted. Judgments favorable to the landlords were rendered in roughly 1,800 of these cases. The use of the courts to undermine Agrarian Reform came to an end in 1929 with the presidency of Portes Gil.²¹³

RESOLUCIÓN PRESIDENCIAL OF SANTA MARÍA IXCATLAN

The citizens of Ixcatlan applied for a *resolución presidencial* through the Departamento Agrario of the federal government on January 25, 1939. They requested the formation of an *ejido* with an area of 41,530 hectares. In so doing they submitted for consideration documents from their municipal archives to substantiate their claims to the land, including the possession of 1743 that was granted the cacique Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar. Transcriptions of these manuscripts were made and entered into the official records of Agrarian Reform. These instruments were recognized by the agency as being authentic and representative of communal boundaries on May 22, 1944.²¹⁴

As soon as the intentions of Ixcatlan were known, problems began to develop with the neighboring communities. The citizens of San Miguel Guautla, San Miguel Tequixtepec, and the three *agencias* of Coixtlahuaca, San Pedro Nodón, Río Blanco, and Río Poblano, all banded together for the sole purpose of modifying the boundaries of

²¹³ Simpson, 1937.

²¹⁴ Diario oficial del gobierno, May 10, 1948.

Ixcatlan. This confederation wished to dispossess the Ixcatecs of a significant portion of their territory. A request was made for the donation of lands south of a line that runs from El Mirador to Rasca Toro and the Cruz del Tecojote. They also wanted properties east of a line from the Piedra del Chapaneco through Cuanda to the Cruz del Tecojote. This area encompasses a total of 7,300 hectares on the slopes of Murillo and the frontier with Nodón.²¹⁵

To achieve their goal, the presidents of the Comité Ejidal Agrario from each community embarked on an aggressive letter writing campaign and elicited the help of sympathetic organizations in the region. Letters were sent to the Comité Agraria Mixta de Oaxaca, the Governor of Oaxaca and even President Miguel Alemán at Los Pinos. In the two page communication with the President, the group claimed that the land they sought had been abandoned by Santa María Ixcatlan “since time immemorial” and was now vacant. They suggested that the addition of this territory to their communities would benefit more than 570 families. These families were depicted as landless poor, who lived in misery and subsisted only by their work with palm. Their access to this land would also be of great benefit to the regional and national economy. The Ixcatec were accused of stealing their livestock and murder, such that many children had been orphaned.²¹⁶ The revolutionary tone of this correspondence was also employed by the individuals who sought to create an *ejido* from former hacienda lands in the Zapotec settlement of Unión Zapata.²¹⁷

Letters in support of the group’s effort came from near and far. One from the Federación Regional de Trabajadores de Tuxtepec to the Governor of Oaxaca notes that San Miguel Guautla, Río Poblano, and Coixtlahuaca are affiliated with the Congreso de

²¹⁵ SRH Legajo 708.1.

²¹⁶ SRH Legajo 708.1.

²¹⁷ Stephen, 2000.

Trabajadores Mexicano. It stated that the humble families of these communities have been subjected to hunger and misery long enough and it would be very beneficial to resolve the matter in their behalf. Similar communications were sent by the Poder Ejecutivo Federal of the Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas and its Oaxacan delegation, the Confederación Nacional Campesina, the Liga de Comunidades Agrarias, and the Sindicatos Campesinos del Estado del Oaxaca.

One particularly bellicose letter is directed to the governor of Oaxaca from the Centro Liberal de Oaxaqueños de la Región de Orizaba on October 20, 1946. In this text Enrique Mendoza and Procepio Hernández of the Executive Committee equate the people of Ixcatlan with the caciques, owners of *latifundios*, and “the inhuman system of monopolies.” They are said to own “haciendas, fantastic fortunes, and thousands and thousands of heads of cattle.” Such a characterization is an obvious overstatement. In contrast, the rhetoric depicts the inhabitants of Guautla and Río Poblano as humble palm weavers who only have tortillas and beans to feed their children. They suffer like slaves for lack of access to the land held by Ixcatlan.²¹⁸

The formal measurement of the ejido established by Agrarian Reform was conducted following the publication of Ixcatlan’s *resolución presidencial* on May 10, 1948 (Figure 66). The survey of land began at the Cañada de Tres Clavos the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Coixtlahuaca and Tequixtepec.²¹⁹ From this boundary marker the process of delineation moved 440 meters northwest to the point known as Mirador Chiquito. The representatives of Tequixtepec contested the placement of the marker here and insisted that the next point along the boundary line should be north of Tres Clavos, at an unnamed point on the side of Murillo. Such a modification in the boundary would

²¹⁸ Stephen, 2000

²¹⁹ Diario oficial del gobierno, May 10, 1948.

transfer 2,302.6 hectares to Tequixtepec, giving them control of the slopes of El Mirador and Cerro Flor, as well as the Escate Valley. This track of land contains valuable pasturelands, springs, and forest resources. As Tequixtepec could not give any evidence or documentation to support their assertion, it was rejected by the governmental authorities.

From Mirador Chiquito the boundary extended 11,190 meters north, generally following the ridge line formed by El Mirador and Cerro Flor north to Gandudo. This was the *punto trino* with Ixcatlan, Tequixtepec and Tepelmeme. This *mojonera* was uncontested and accepted by all concerned. From Gandudo the boundary proceeded 6,360 meters northeast to Cerro Tinto on the upper flanks of the Cañada Colorada. It then continues down, past the ruins of San Miguel Nopala, to the point called La Concordia. These last two markers were mutually agreed upon by Ixcatlan and Tepelmeme in 1942. Here the line turns north and follows the Espinazo del Diablo to the Río Xuquila and the *mojonera* of Mejia el Viejo, 7,060 meters distant. This location serves as the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Tepelmeme and Mejia.

Heading down river the survey traveled east along the course of the Río Xuquila 10,140 meters until they arrived at Alcalaqui, a point close to the junction with the Río Salado. Alcalaqui was recognized as the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Mejia and Los Cues. At Alcalaqui the survey made a significant deviation from the boundary recognized in 1743 and 1891. Traveling 250 meters southeast across the river the boundary passed through the location designated simply as Transit Station 86 and then headed south 840 meters to Vertice 84. From this intermediary point the line moved southeast a distance of 7,300 meters to Transit Station 60 and 300 meters east before arriving at La Posteca, the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Los Cues and Tecomavaca. The line between Ixcatlan and its neighbors no longer followed the Río Salado, but moved

into the hills south of the river. This donation of land had previously been worked out between the communities themselves. Those involved in the negotiations are no longer alive to tell of the motivation or reason for Ixcatlan's generosity. In some fashion it returned all the lands that had been purchased by the Ixcatec in the preceding centuries and much more.

From La Posteca the new boundary turned southeast 4,240 meters to Portezuelo del Potrero and then another 76,000 meters in the same direction to Vertice 482, also called Tres Clavos, passing over Mesa del Cosahuico. This portion of the line crosses steep canyons and climbs steadily up. It continued on easterly 1,050 meters to El Mirado and then south 800 meters to Angostura. This point rests on the banks of the Río Vela and is the *punto trino* with Ixcatlan, Tecomavaca, and Jocotipac.

The division line then followed the course of the Río Vela upstream 7,050 meters to the Peña del Gavilán, near the confluence of the Río Zapato. Here the lands of Ixcatlan and Jocotipac adjoin those of San Pedro Nodón. The Río Vela continues to be the boundary for another 1,060 meters to Montón de Piedras, the *punto trino* between Ixcatlan, Nodón and San Miguel Guautla.

At this point the boundary left the river and traveled 1,800 meters southeast to Cerro del Pajarito and another 1,820 meters to Cerro la Victoria, before it arrived at Cruz del Tejocote 2,170 meters distant. The Cruz del Tejocote was the *punto trino* with Ixcatlan, Guautla and Coixtlahuaca. The representatives of Guautla did not recognize these markers and this section of the boundary. They declined to offer any other proposals to establish different points of separation between Ixcatlan and Guautla and refused to sign the *Acta de Conformidad*.

The survey concluded by tracing the boundary between Ixcatlan and Coixtlahuaca across El Murillo. From Cruz del Tecojote the line extended northeast 1,600 meters to

La Paz and then 1,700 meters to La Union. The final 5,000 meters passed through Progreso and returned to Cañada Tres Clavos to complete the circumference of Ixcatlan. The *ejido* of Ixcatlan established by Reforma Agraria encompasses the entire *municipio*.

It is interesting to note that names of the *mojoneras* established by the *resolución presidencial* of Ixcatlan differ greatly from those used in earlier land documents. Many of the historical names have been eliminated and markers moved, even when the boundary line remains unchanged. These modifications reflect the results of negotiation and compromise among the communities involved. They also demonstrate the modernization of survey process with engineering instruments and the abandonment, to some degree, of a reliance on documentation from the past.

Unfortunately for Ixcatlan, the *resolución presidencial* did not resolve all the problems that the community had with its neighbors. Rather than usher in a period of peace and mutual understanding, it was the beginning of one of the most tumultuous times for the region. Unhappy with the results of the process, the populace of Guautla resorted to physical violence in the hopes of intimidating the Ixcatec into submission. Many of the traumatic events are still vividly recounted in Ixcatlan.

The hostilities between the two communities began to escalate in October 1946. José Navidad Álvarez and his two sons were attacked by citizens of Guautla as they tended their goats along the banks of the Río Sabino, just below the springs. The elder Álvarez was killed in the skirmish. His sons were taken to Guautla and kept there for a time. The herd of goats was never returned to the family. A few months later, in February 1947, another band of armed Guatecos raided the territory of Ixcatlan. They took captive all the Ixcatec and livestock they encountered. Sixteen individuals from Ixcatlan were sequestered in a remote *rancho* on the far side of Guautla, where they were held incommunicado. After a week, in response to the *leal amparo* sought in their behalf,

the prisoners were taken to Nochixtlan. Once there, they were released by the authorities and allowed to return home. Their animals however, were never returned.

The persecution of Ixcatlan continued through the following months. The Ixcatec recall that men from Guautla regularly appeared on the heights above town and fired upon them from positions on El Murillo and La Cumbre. The death of José Navidad Martel on April 6, 1949 is also remembered by the Ixcatecs. They report the loss of nearly one thousand animals that year, including a large herd from Tilapa that was pasturing on Llano Flor, above the Río Frio. Many citizens of Ixcatlan opted to abandoned their homes and left town. Those who stayed did so with fear and in trepidation. The Ixcatec constantly had to seek cover from the barrage. “We lived like rabbits,” one survivor told me.

Throughout this period Ixcatlan sought relief and restitution from state and federal authorities in Oaxaca. They received very little assistance. On one occasion a high ranking state official responded to their request for intervention in the conflict by asking “*Y ustedes, ¿no son hombres?*”²²⁰ From this reply the Ixcatec understood that they were expected to deal with the matter by themselves, like men, and not rely on the state to resolve their problem.

The situation persisted until 1952. Genaro Hernandez was killed as he kept vigil in the cemetery behind the church one night. During July of that year Isidro Martel was captured as he was gathering firewood. He was returned to Ixcatlan three days later by a contingent from Guautla. On this occasion the Guatecos demanded that Ixcatlan give their community a piece of property in exchange for a cessation of hostilities. Their request was later reinforced with the kidnapping of Francisco Guzman in November. At that point Ixcatlan agreed to “loan” some property to Guautla. A verbal agreement

²²⁰ “And you, are you not men?”

between the two communities was reached on December 4, 1952. The arrangement recognized Piedra de la Union, rather than Monton de Piedras, as the *punto trino* between Nodón, Guautla, and Ixcatlan. The two points are approximately 150 meters apart. This modification of the boundary provided Guautla with access to an additional 1,931.20 hectares of land.

In 1970 Guautla sought legal right to this territory through the courts. The suit sought the modification of their *resolución presidencial*, claiming that they held continual, public and passive possession of the land for many years. The Supreme Court eventually ruled in favor of Guautla. The disputed lands were officially added to its communal holdings by the degree of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz on April 8 of that year.²²¹

No sooner had Guautla secured legal claim to this territory from Ixcatlan, than it forcibly possessed more land. In 1971, it expanded its borders by cutting a new boundary line from the Peña del Gavilán, the *punto trino* shared by Ixcatlan, Jocotipac, and Nodón, southwest to the *mojonera* at La Paz. This action eliminated the contiguity between Ixcatlan and San Pedro Nodón, and denied the Ixcatec access to important resources. Many local farmers lost their milpas in the rich red soil of the hills below Cuanda on the frontier with Nodón.

The relationship between Ixcatlan and Guautla was strained again on October 14, 1995. Reports were heard that the Guatecos were clearing a new boundary line across the Zacatal. The number of men involved was so great that the Ixcatec dared not interfere, they could only watch from a safe distance. Two days later, an Ixcatec who was headed east along the road to Nodón to harvest agave was stopped at Montiel by an

²²¹ *Diario oficial del gobierno*, May 23, 1970.

armed group of men from Guautla. He was informed that the land from that point on was now in possession of Guautla. Passage into the area was not permitted.

Eventually the Guatecos cut a *brecha* from the Río Vela, through Zacatal, over the Cuanda ridge, across the Río Sabino, and up the slopes of Murillo. This invasion denied the Ixcatec use of the eastern portion of the municipio, including the *milpas* near Nodón, in Nopalera and Montiel. These lands were some of the most productive under cultivation in Ixcatlan. The Ixcatec also utilized the area to supply agave for the preparation of mescal, pasture for their flocks, and the gathering of firewood. At this time, the land is still held by Guautla.

The claim by Guautla to the captured territory is based on its perceived need for land. They want an opportunity to renegotiate communal boundaries under new laws for agrarian reform enacted during the administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gotari.²²² With a growing population and limited land resources, Guautla has once again looked to Ixcatec territory, which they regard as underutilized, to satisfy the demand.

The action of Guautla made the citizens of Ixcatlan very uneasy and concerned about the future. They felt helpless in light of the superior manpower and firepower controlled by Guautla and the lawyers they employed. Considering the action of Guautla to be capricious and illegal, the Ixcatec looked to the government for relief. They believed that the well-documented claim they hold on the land, something that Guautla does not possess, would preserve their rights. At the same time, their past experiences gave them little faith in the system.

In 2005 the *Tribunal Agrario* issued a ruling in the conflict between Ixcatlan and San Miguel Guautla. They stated that the law could not recognize or support Guautla's

²²² Cámara de Diputados, 1992.

claim to the land they held. The Guaitecos have withdrawn from the territory but the Ixcatec are hesitant to return to the area and commence agricultural activities there.

Guaatla is not alone in its designs on Ixcatec lands. While having to endure the troubles inflicted by the Guaitecos over the last five decades, the Ixcatec have also been pressured by similar tactics from San Miguel Tequixtepec. Its residents still seek to change the boundary line of the *resolución presidencial* between Gandudo and Tres Clavos. They have tried to physically enforce the frontier they wish to recognize. In 1949, three citizens from Ixcatlan were taken at gun point as they plowed a field in Escate. They were first jailed in Tequixtepec and then moved to Coixtlahuaca before *amparo* was granted in their behalf. The following year, men from Tequixtepec came up over the Gandudo ridge from the west and chased several Ixcatec men who were working their fields. During that raid Silverio Herrera was caught and killed.

The boundary markers between Ixcatlan and Tequixtepec were erected in 1951 by engineers from the Secretaría de Reforma Agraria in accord with the *resolución presidencial*. The Ixcatec hoped that this action would bring an end to the discord from Tequixtepec. However, as soon as the markers had been constructed, they were destroyed. The authorities from Tequixtepec then tried to survey the boundary themselves and establish another set of *mojoneras*. This action was met with protest by the men of Ixcatlan, who appeared to denounce this effort and stop the progress of the work detail from Tequixtepec. Soon thereafter, the municipal president of Ixcatlan, Maximino López, disappeared while tending to his milpa. To this day, the Ixcatec assume that he was ambushed and killed at the hands of their neighbors and his body buried secretly.

Over the next ten years, armed men from Tequixtepec patrolled the highlands which divide the two communities. They would often shoot towards Ixcatlan from their

positions on the slopes of Cerro Flor. Descending to the base of the mountain, they would also shout at the Ixcatec and taunt them. Their presence essentially closed the well-traveled path between Ixcatlan and Coixtlahuaca. The Ixcatec relate that they had to avoid traveling on the trail and sneak through mountains like deer, cautiously avoiding detection.

The bloody relations between Ixcatlan and Tequixtepec persisted until 1962. Credit for the resolution of the problem is given to a chance encounter in the plaza of Coixtlahuaca between an Ixcatec and a friend from Palo Solo. The two men talked about the situation between the two communities over drinks. They decided to ask their respective municipal authorities to meet and discuss the issue. The two *ayuntamientos* could not agree on a site for the conference and it appeared that nothing would be resolved. Eventually they came together on El Mirador and decided to end the hostilities that divided them. Later that year, a fire at the church in Tequixtepec destroyed the image of Saint Michael the Archangel, their patron saint. Citizens from Ixcatlan went over to pay their respects to the saint. This gesture helped to further calm the tensions that had existed. The peace that followed allowed Ixcatlan to cut a road into Palo Solo the following year and open its first vehicular connection with the outside world.

Unfortunately, the problems between Ixcatlan and Tequixtepec redeveloped in 1985. The Ixcatec again solicited to have the boundary markers placed between the two communities. The request was granted by Reforma Agraria and completed under their direction. Once again, residents of Tequixtepec leveled the markers. Since that time representatives from the each side continue to discuss their disagreements, but nothing has been resolved. The Ixcatec say that Tequixtepec still has not offered any documents which substantiate their claims or any valid arguments as to why the boundary should be

renegotiated. They remain pessimistic about any significant results being generated by future talks, unless the situation changes.

The experience of Ixcatlan with its neighbors is certainly not unique. It is, in fact, quite similar to the circumstances that have involved San Andrés Zautla and Metzaltepec, as described by Dennis.²²³ The state of Oaxaca has 570 *municipios* and conflicts between these entities are common. Disputes frequently arose between communities during the colonial period.²²⁴ Many of these conflicts have persisted for an extended period of time and even become very violent.²²⁵ The case of Santa María Ixcatlan is another example of this phenomenon.

IMAGINARY LINES AND SURREALISTIC LANDSCAPES

As Ixcatlan attempts to defend itself and its lands from the ambitions of its neighbors, the most aggressive incursion into Ixcatec territory is perpetrated by modern map makers. Just two years after Ixcatlan received its *resolución presidencial* through the Secretaría de Reforma Agraria, the first map containing a scheme for the municipal boundaries for the state of Oaxaca was published. It was distributed with the report of the 1950 census.²²⁶ This scheme shows Tecomavaca extending north of Ixcatlan and sharing a boundary with Tepelmeme. No contiguity with Tequixtepec is indicated, however. Moreover, the administration of Nodón was transferred from Coixtlahuaca to Cuicatlan in 1955, but this change is not reflected in the maps of this period either.

Another set of municipal maps which receive official status among governmental agencies at all levels is produced by COPLADE, the Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo del Estado. Their maps are used in the planning and delivering of services

²²³ Dennis, 1987.

²²⁴ Taylor, 1972 and Stephen, 2000

²²⁵ Dennis, 1987.

²²⁶ Censo, 1950.

through the state. Some of the problems seen in the earlier maps have been eliminated in those printed by the Committee, but other mistakes persist. (Figure 67)

Although the COPLADE issues their municipal maps, the plans they use are provided to the agency by the local office of the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes. COPLADE assumes that the maps generated by this branch of the federal government are correct and reprints them without question in its publications.

The Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geográfica e Informativa (INEGI) currently bears the responsibility of gathering statistical data, such as the census, for the Republic of Mexico. For the purpose of the census the INEGI also prepares municipal maps (Figure 68). The configuration of Ixcatlan which was generated for the last census undertaken in 1995 is quite curious.²²⁷ The northern boundary of the municipio is not the Río Xuquila, but rather is a line that extends upstream along the Río Seco from its junction with the Río Salado, just south of Tecomavaca. This boundary continues up the Río Santiago through Mal Paso and then up over La Cumbre. It then passes across the divide and drops down into the Ixcatlan valley along the drainage towards town. On the outskirts of town, the line turns sharply and goes a short distance up the base of Cerro Flor. Here it joins the western boundary, a line that has been drawn to connect Gandudo and Rasca Toro. According to the INEGI mapmakers, Tecomavaca owns all of the land between the Río Santiago and the Río Xuquila and extends to a point within a few meters of the homes in Ixcatlan. In so doing, it shares a frontier with Tepelmeme and Tequixtepec.

On this map, the boundary of Ixcatlan from Rasca Toro, on the slopes of Murillo, continues to a location in the vicinity of Tres Clavos at the head of the Barranca Escate. This point is the punto trino between Ixcatlan, Tequixtepec, and Coixtlahuaca. By

²²⁷ Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, 1995.

running the line through Rasca Toro, INEGI suggests that Tequixtepec has control of the Cerro Flor ridge and Escate. Like Tecomavaca, its lands extend within a short distance of Ixcatlan.

From Tres Clavos the southern boundary line heads east up the slopes of Murillo along a route that appears to follow the actual brecha used to mark the frontier. On the east side of the mountain, however, it descends along the first *barranca* to the Río Sabino. From this point the boundary line follows the course of the river until it joins the Río Vela, with eventually carries it all the way down to the Río Grande. The Río Vela is indeed the eastern boundary of the community, according to the Ixcatec and their *resolución presidencial*. It is interesting to note, however, that Ixcatlan's neighbor along the entire course of the river is Cuicatlan. The map does not reflect the fact that Nodón, as an *agencia de Cuicatlan*, is an island that is not contiguous with the rest of the municipality to which it belongs. In so doing, it also denies Jocotipac a mutual boundary with Ixcatlan.

Mystified by the discrepancies between the INEGI map and the *resolución presidencial* of Ixcatlan, I spoke with the cartographers in the Oaxaca office of the Institute. They informed me that the municipal maps they generated were intended only for the purposes of the census. The boundaries which delimit a community were created to encompass its population and serve their statistical need. Their standard procedure is to utilize the major geographical features, such as major mountain peaks and rivers, on the topographic maps of any given region to parse the landscape. No attempt is made to determine the actual boundaries of the municipalities in the state. It is feared that any effort to do so would generate too much controversy, given the strong sentiments that most communities have for their lands. The Institute feels safer preparing and disseminating maps that meet their needs, even if they lack any sense of reality. The

maps are still statistically valid, it is argued. The archival copies of municipal maps preserved at the INEGI offices bear the disclaimer “the limits of municipalities, or states, presented here do not necessarily correspond to the political-administrative limits, they only treat geo-statistical limits, and the position of localities is approximate.” Unfortunately this warning does not appear on any of the maps which are included in INEGI publications.

The municipal maps published with the 1995 census were an innovation for INEGI. Prior to that time, the Institute utilized the political divisions represented on maps it must have inherited from SPP in 1983, when it was given the responsibility of gathering and printing the official statistics for the nation.

Most regrettably, public agencies have been sharing inaccurate municipal maps among themselves for a number of decades. The erroneous information also has worked its way onto the plans prepared by private enterprise, as well, such as the widely published *Guia Roja*. The maps now appear on innumerable internet sites. The unfortunate result is that no one really understands the political division of Oaxaca.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The Ixcatec have occupied their corner of northern Oaxaca for many centuries. The pre-Columbian inhabitants often chose defensible positions for their settlements, preferring mountain ridges and naturally protected spurs. These locations controlled the routes of communication and access to water. Like the other cultures in the region, the Ixcatec utilized the limited precipitation available by constructing and maintaining cross current terraces in nearby *barrancas*. These features allowed them to take advantage of scant water run-off and accumulate soil in their garden plots. They also terraced the upper slopes of their mountain homeland to create additional land for cultivation. These terraced walls provided another layer of defense for their habitations.

It is clear from observations made concerning the archaeological remains in the area that the Ixcatec participated in the cultural advancements of their neighbors. Irrigation techniques, which were developed in the Tehuacan Valley and also used in the Cuicatlan Cañada, are found in Ixcatlan as well. The iconography of the carved stones found at La Muralla show a close connection between the Ixcatec and religious ritual in Mixteca-Puebla region. It may well be that the Ixcatec rulers were tied in to the network of royal marriage that linked the elite families of the Zapotec, Mixtec and Chocho with the royal lineages of Puebla.

Further investigation of the local archaeology will be necessary to better understand the prehispanic chronology of the area and the nature of Ixcatec culture. My fieldwork has revealed that there is an abundance of sites in the area that span an extensive period of time. These archaeological resources are well-preserved and largely undisturbed. Their exploration would provide data to improve our knowledge of the prehistoric occupation of the Mixtec Alta and inter-regional relationships. Ixcatlan has a

unique abundance of unspoiled sites that were inhabited at the time of Spanish contact and remained occupied into the early colonial period. Excavation in these locations would certainly expand the understanding of cultural transitions made at this critical time in history.

The cacicazgo of Ixcatlan survived the conquest and continued to govern Ixcatlan through much of the colonial period. The rapid loss in population caused by disease and forced labor affected the succession of the royal lineage. The nobility pragmatically responded to these difficulties by allowing women to inherit and govern for the first time. Children often inherited at a young age due to the early death of their parents. The royal family intermarried with the neighboring cacicazgos of Suchistlahuaca, Tepelmeme and Quiotepec. In the eighteenth century, when many communities throughout Mexico had lost or neglected their native rulers, Ixcatlan continued to embrace and recognize its nobility. In 1743 Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar petitioned to inherit the cacicazgo following his mother's death. The citizens of Ixcatlan did not hesitate to support his acquisition of the title and its landholdings.

Throughout the years, the cacicazgo successfully defended and maintained the land it controlled in behalf of the community. The first recorded incursion into its territory occurred at Axumulco (Nodón) in 1580. It was repelled through the colonial legal system after an appeal to the viceroy. In the years that followed the caciques of Ixcatlan were granted legal possession of lands from the borders with Coixtlahuaca northward through the mountains and across the Río Xuquila. Landholdings were eventually extended northeastward to the Río Salado with the purchase of property from the cacique of Tecomavaca.

The grants held by the Ixcatec caciques continue to serve as the legal basis for the community to this day. The laws of the reform in the nineteenth century required Ixcatlan

to privatize its property. The Ixcatec instead used the records of the caciques to preserve and protect their territory. The colonial land titles of Ixcatlan even served to defend the borders of the state of Oaxaca from incursion by the state of Puebla.

With the agrarian reform movement that followed the Mexican revolution, Ixcatlan once again relied on the *mercedes* of its caciques to reestablish its boundaries. It is ironic that the *resolución presidencial* has only served to create conflict between Ixcatlan and its neighbors. After centuries of peaceful coexistence, the dispute has led to the invasion and occupation of Ixcatec lands by Guautla. Similarly, boundaries and territorial rights remain a source of contention with Tequixtepec. The citizens of Ixcatlan have chosen to passively defend their legal rights through the government agencies, armed with the titles of land granted in 1743 and 1890. The system has yet to produce the desired results.

The citizens of Santa Maria Ixcatlan have seen considerable improvements to their quality of life in the past fifty years. The opening of a road has allowed vehicular traffic into town. Access to goods and services is greatly improved, as one might expect. A government-sponsored clinic offers medical consultation and treatment. The local diet is enhanced through a federal program, as well. A secondary school has extended the educational opportunities in the community.

At the same time, the road is new means of egress for the Ixcatec. They have taken advantage of the opportunity to seek a better life elsewhere. A great majority of the new educated generation leave for further study and improved employment prospects. For the first time, Ixcatlan can boast of having university trained professionals. Unfortunately, they do not return to the village.

The Ixcatec continue to be marginalized in the national economy. The fabrication of palm hats is still the only major industry in town, just as it has been for several

centuries. Their weaving skills offer very little opportunity for economic advancement to the members of the community.

As a marginalized community with few economic resources, land is Ixcatlan's most important asset. It finds itself in a "hostile environment, surrounded by real or potential enemies with whom neither alliance nor cooperation is possible. Their fellow peasants constitute a permanent threat."²²⁸ The disagreement with its neighbors may well continue for quite some time into the future. The Ixcatec continue to privately negotiate with their neighbors to resolve the issue. It is their only hope for survival as a community.

²²⁸ Warman, 1972:103, as cited in Dennis, 1987:153.

Appendix A

Relación geográfica de Santa Maria Ixcatlan, 1579 (JGI XXIV-7)

Para en cumplimiento de lo que v^{ra} e^x me mando hiziese, segun la ynstrucion que me molde fue dada, en este corregimiento de Yxcatlan, Quiotepec y Tecomavaca y su jurisdicción a 13 dias del mes de octubre de 1579 anos, ante el escri^o de mi juzgado, Juan deChaves, y del p^e frei p^o Coronel, fraile agustino, y de Nicolas de Rendano y de Juan Ortiz, vzos de la ciudad de Mex^{co} y estantes al presente en este pu^o de Yxcatlan, teniendo para esto un nagualato fiel and de buena lengua llamado Simon Basques. Delante del gobernador y alldes deste dho pu^o mi fueron presentados dos indios ancianos, el uno de edad de 100 poco mas oa menos llamado Alonso y el otro de mas de 800 anos llamado Ju^o Acatl, y otro muchos. Encargandoles, dixesen y declaresen las cosas en a que este memorial contenidas y prometieron de dizir verdad en todo lo que les fuere preguntado conforme al memorial por v^{ra} e^x, enbiado u leyendo cada capitulo.

1. A lo primero llamase este pu^o Yxcatlan, que quiere dezir lugar de algodón. Y llamase ansi porque de muchos tiempos atras, biendo un famoso capitán que avia falta de algodón, quisi dar orden en como se senbrase. Y para rregar las guertas de algodón, hizo abrir un serro y minallo de una parte a orta, como agora paresce, por donde quizo enbocar un rrio. Y como no pasase el agua buen, salio muy alta esta mina, que tiene de largo atravesado toda la sierra 40 braças de largo y veinte de ancho. Y llamase ests quebrada oloztoc, que quire dezir queba rrendondo. Y esta

deste pu^o tres leguas, dentro de la qual están en la boveda della pintados muchos despejos, macanas, dardos, flechas, arcos, ycapasates, como los usaban a manera de cabeças de patos, y huesos y calabernas. Y dizen algunos que, yendo alli ha hazer sus arrietos, ofrecian alli algodón. Y de alli quedo este nombre lugar de algodón, como quiera que este pu^o sea falto del. Llamase tambien Tamzcalapa por esta quebrada, que es a manera de temascal o baño. Y aun el día de oy llaman algunos ansi.

2. Fueron en su gentilidad libres por si y no rreconoçian a nadie. Y q los sujeto fue solo Montesuma. Y biniendo el Marqués del Valle, enbio a Rr^o de Sigura y le sujeto y conquisto. Y muriendo, quedo el pu^o a su mujer, la qual caso con Gregorio de Tapia. Y por muerte de los dos dichos sin dexar erejero, se puso en cabeça de su mag^{tt}.
3. El tenple de este pu^o Yxcatlan es frio y humedo por estar en serrania. Y muy falto de aguas que, sino son arroyos que en el tienpo de las aguas ay en algunas partes, no tienen otro de que proveerse para la seca. Y para esto tienen muchos magueyes que ellos sacan aquella agua miel. Y esa beven el tiempo que del çielo les falta, aunque media legua deste pu^o ay una fuente que todo el año corre. Y de ordinario en todo el año bate el norte aqui no demasiadam^{te} q no se puede tolerar. Es pu^o y tierra muy seca y umido.
4. Es tierra aspera por ser, como es todo serrania.
5. En tiempo de su gentilidad fueron ocho mill yndios y mas. Y la causa de averse acabado y consumido, segun ellos dizen, es por sacarlos su encomendero de dosientos en docientos cada mes y hazer esclavos, enbiandolos a las minas, donde

quedavan la mitad muertos. Y los demas se vyan por no sacar el oro. Y los que agora pueden aver quedado son trecientos y tantos poblados, los ciento y cuarenta en al cabacera y los demas rrepartiados en tres estancias o pueblos, llamada el uno Nocpala, q quiere dizer hoja de tuna, el otro Tecopango, y el otro Coyula, que quiere dizer lugar de caxcabeles. Todos están bien ordenados y buen asiento de pu^os frios y trasados sus calles y casas a su modo y al parecer que permaneseran.

6. Es la lengua destos en toda la provincia chochona. Y ablan muy pocos la general mexicana.
7. Este pu^o es el distrito y gobernación de Mex^{co}. Y esta de la ciudad Mex^{co} çinquenta y ocho leguas.
8. Esta este pu^o de la ciudad de Guaxaca veynte dos leguas poco mas o menos y de la ciudad de los Angeles 36 leguas. Y a la una y a la otra tiene por ambos lados, la una al oriente y otra al poniente. Y las leguas son son muy largas ni de mal camino, biniendo o yendo por el camino rreal que es lo mas llano y derecho.
- 9.
- 10.
11. Dista este pu^o de Ixcatlan de la alcaldia mayor de Anguitlan 7 leguas azi al sur y al norte treze leguas del de Cuscatlan y a la parte del norte del correximiento de Teutitlan seys leguas y de el sur el corregimiento de Cuicatlan ocho leguas.
- 12.

13.

14. En tiempo de su gentilidad fueron de un gran señor llamado Quautzintectli, hijo de Tzintectli. Y destos descendieron a señorear hasta los bisnietos y tataranietos. Y un hijo de Quautzintectli fue bendito de Moctesuma y desposesiondole del señorío les puso gobernador, aun siempre mandava al primer señor alimentos de la mitad de los tributos. Y viniendo el Marques del Valle, envió a Rodrigo de Sigura, como queda. Dho que los conquistó y gobernava a la zona. Y llevaba la mitad de los tributos el aquél del que es ahora gobernador, Don Juan de Santiago. Y lo que tributaban era oro en unos texuelos del tamaño de una ostia y de grueso poco más o menos de dos dedos. Y dabanle cada año cuarenta de aquellos fuera de otras cosas que pedían, como eran gallinas, papas, cosas de caza y otras a este tono.

Adoraban estos en su gentilidad dos ydolos. El uno era el dios de los barones y el otro dios de las mujeres. El de los barones era llamado Acatl, que quiere decir caña. Y el de los mujeres era Ocelotl, que quiere decir tigre. Y para estos dos dioses tenían su templo en un monte sobre el qual estava un gu muy grande de treinta varas en quadras. Y en cima del cu o cepa fundado el templo de piedra y argamasa, cubierta la techumbre de muy grandes maderos de cedro. Y el templo baxo, como de dos estados, y en quadra como veinte brazas, encalado y toldado de mantas pintadas y labrados con plumas de patos, que llaman tomitl, y de pelos de liebres y de conejos, que decían tuchmatl. Eran los idolos ambos de piedra verde muy estimada entre ellos y de dos cuartas poco menos de alto. Y tenían pinjantes de oro y brazaletes de lo propio y orejeras y beçotes. Y estaban metidos en unos sestos aferrados en mantas que nunca. En todo el año sacaban, sino era en las fiestas que celebraban, que eran quatro. La pr^a llamaban Malinaltzi, que quiere decir la fiesta de torcer. Y era la

fiesta de fuego o de la lumbre porque llevaban unos troncos de madera y con las otras puntas muy agudas y torcinedo en el otro palo encendian lumbre. Y sahumaban con el yncendio que tenian que llamaban copali. Y aquel fuego servia de quemar los sacrificios. Y esta fiesta era a entrarlos juntos los dos idolos. Y ponian los a vista del pu^o en sus altares de flores y rosas sobre unos ycpales y silletas. No habia entonces ofrenda mas de regozijos, baylee y mitotes.

Llamaba la segunda la fiesta del Ocçelotl, que quiere dizer tigre, que solo salia aquel ydolo. Y ofresiandole palomas y tortolas solamente y, segun dicen, en tanta cantidad que ocho mill yndios no dexava de ofrecer ninguno. Y el que no podía yr, estando lejos, enviava doblada la ofrenda.

Era la tercera fiesta del Acatl, que llaman caña. Y en esta el cacique y señor ofresia, el solo y no otro alguno. Y la ofrenda esa solo un quetzalo plumaje verde guarnecido de oro y una paloma en una caña verde. Y llevaba estas dos cosas desde su casa y acompañandole todo el pu^o hasta el templo con mucho ruido de atanbores y de yabebas y cantos de alegria. Y este día dava el cacique a todos de su casa y a los grande de comer y bestir.

La otra solenidad era mayor y mas principal, donde ofreçian hombres y mugeres y peros y patos y codornizes y papel. Y habia una piedra en medio del templo rendoda como rueda molino. Y alli sacaban el coracon del desaventurado, estando bibi, con unas nabajas. Y el coracon llevaban a los ydolos y lo quemaban. Y habian un agujero donde los echavan. Y luego aquel cuerpo estaba ya como sanctificado y daban del a quartos con gran reberençia a quien querian.

Los sacerdotes – la eleccion de los quales hera por autoridad del cabildo y de todo el pu^o. Y tenian un sumo sacerdote que llamaban Quaquilitzin, que era electo de los mismos sacerdotes y todo el pu^o. No heran casados ni se les permitia, Ni salia del templo por ninguna bia. Y si alguno salia era castigado, en especial si le tomaban en adulterio o en cosa de fornicio. Y esto castigaba no el sacerdote sumo, sino el rrei, de manera que el y ella morian a golpes en los cogotes. Y despues eran despedasadas. Y para cumplir el numero que çiempre abia de estar cabal, que heran ocho, para cada ydolo quatro. Quieriedo cumplir el numero hazian su eleccion. Y llamndo el electo, le ponian las carnes del justificado delante. Y le exortaban q que no cayese en lo que su antegesor, sino queria benir aguel desaventurado fin. Y si era casado, de alli se despedia de su mujer e hijos, que nunca mas los bia. Y si la muger yba, como hera costumbre, a la puerta a llmarle para por ella ofreçiese sacrificio, le castigaban como si fornicara. Y era esta la costumbre de que quando algien pedia algo al dios q quien sacrificaba era llevada al templo con la ofenda p^a el ydolo y para el sacerdote. Y tomandolo de la mano, dezia Acatl o Oçelotl pide este y esto. Y esto mismo hazia el que se queria casar. Yba al sacerdote y dezia le su yntento. Y subia el un día de mercado o de fiesta en un quu muy alto. Y dezia a gritos este se quiere casar. Y sacaba una navaja y rraia le la barba y cortababa lw los cavellos. Y bajando de alli, yba a escoxer la que estava por casar, aun fue Jllr^e y pricipal o meçehual, sino la escondia o la trasponian. Y la primera con quien topaba era la legitima. Y hasta quatro o cinco eran como concubinas que se las permitian.

Avia castigo para los ladrones y rrecompensaban al agraviado con los bienes del jsutificado. Y abia castigo para todos los viçios y no los sodomitas. Y el que allaba cargado de pecados llebaba al templo ofenda. Y tantas quantas vezes iba y ofresia,

tanots pecados se le perdonaban. Y hasta cumplir el numero no entrada dentro, sino desde afuersa. Y el poster dis entrada por mano del pontifice principal y le rreconsiliaba.

El traje del pontifice era diferente del de los otros sacerdotes y el de los sacerdotes diferente del de los principales y el de los seculares principales distinto del de los maçeguales. El sumo sacerdote tenia puesto de ordinario un albornos negro ensima con munchas borlas coloradas y una corosilla pequena. Los demas sacerdotes destocados y los albornozes de papel de munchas colores y los dias principales de mantas pintadas de colores y de plumas y peolos de liebre. Los señores andaban con mantas pintadas y maxtles o tirabragueros de plumas y sus orejas o becotes, los maceguals al tono, fuera de que no se les permitia cosa de pluma ni cosa de oro. Rrescatabase el oro en las ferias o mercados. Y alli se bendian mantas, gallinas, peros, esclavos, oro, hachas y otras cosas. Y era rrescatar oro por mantas, por codornizes, esclavos y achuelas por unos petates. Y era de çinco en çinco dias el mercado.

El señor iba por rrinia rrecta. Y quando moria llamaban a todos los basallas y enterabanlo en su casa proprio vestido de rropas dobles con su brasaletes y orejas y becotes y cacles o cotras. Y con el enterraban bibo un criado suyo, el mas querido, en unas bobedas, poniendo primero el bibo y ensima del el definto y luego munchas mantas, xicaras, frutas, gallinas, patos, benados y otras cosas ricas, como piedras, oro, plumas de papaguayos y ençiencio. Y este era el modo de enterrarse, cada uno en su casa y los sacerdotes en el templo con sus bestiduras. Y hazian a lso diez dias la obsequias y de los maceguals y de los prinçipales a çiento y setenta dias. El

modo de testar esra dezir al tiempo que moria como dexaban tales y tales cosas y perros y gallinas para los del templo.

15. Las guerras que tenian eran con los de Montesuma que los beniasn a sujetar. Y despues de hechos basallos del Montesuma no tubieron guerras. Su traje era como ests dho arriba en el cap^o 14. Los mantenimientos son los ordinario. Y estos an usado çiempe mays, fijoles, raizes y caças de benados, que los ay a la rrendonda una y dos leguas, y gallinas y yerbas de su mantenimiento.

16.

17. Las enfermedades ordinarias de que estos naturales adoleçen comunmente son cada rrotose y calenturas y el rreparo, que para esto tienen es solo sangrarse de las sienes por consejo de algunas mugeres y hombres que llaman titziltl, que quiere dizer medico. Y estos sangran o dan bebediosos de yerbas molidas. No ay entre ellos los erbolarios q solia aver antguamente.

18.

19.

20.

21. Ay en este pu^o aguella quebrada notable y mina que arriba diximos para saber como se llama este pu^o en el capitulo primero.

22. Ay en toda esta tierra, ansi en las bisitas como en la cabecera, muchos morales de que se beneficia la seda. Ay otros q llaman quahuxitoes, que quiere dezir arboles de lepera. Y estos tienen la corteza como lepera de aca, que es ordinaria llamada xicote, que es a manera de enpienes que traen el cuero apostillado. Y estos arboles son en dos maneras y ambos apostillados, como el tronco del madrono, aunque las postillas muy amorosos y blandos. Unos son blancos y otors colorados. Y estilan de se una goma. La de los blancos es buena para rretner las cameras. Y estrine en gran manera bebida y desleida. Y el colorado echa una goma amarilla que corronpe en gran manera. Ay otos arboles de tecomahaca. Sus rrays y parte del tronco estando seco, paresese en el olor y en el color a linalo de lo muy fino. La goma es conosida y muy apropiada para dolores de la cabeca.
23. De los arboles de España de frutas solo se dan menbrillos y granadas.
- 24.
25. Benefician la seda en esta provincia y cojese en ella como cantidad de cien libras cada año, poco mas o menos.
- 26.
27. Hay en estas montañas leonsillos, pardos y tigruerillos pequenos, benados, coyotoes, q son a manera de las zorras de España, y texonsillos, que llaman en su lengua pitzotl.
- 28.

29.

30. Hay cerca deste pu^o seys leguas unas salinas de q se probeen los yndios de sal. Y falta en este dho pu^o el algodón como queda dho en el cap^o pr^o.

31.

32.

33. Las tratos destos naturales son de ordinario – hazer petates y texerlos y la seda, aunque pocos. Y hazen tenates a manera de sestillos. Y el mayor trato que hay entre ellos es este y beneficiar los maguays y sacar miel y bendarla. Y de alli pagan sus tributos.

34. La diodesi es es del obispado de Guaxaca, lamada por otro nombre la ciudad de Antiquera. Y tiene esto por beneficio un clérigo llamado po Rruiz Suarez. Es la diodesi deste pu^o viente y dos leguas no muy grandes y los caminos, aunque bien abiertos, asperos y desabridos.

Appendix B

Possession of land granted to Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar, Cacique of Santa María Ixcatlan , 1743.

Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca

Ramo de Repartos y Adjudicaciones, Legajo 30.

En el pueblo y cabecera de Yxcatlan a primero día del mes de Abril de mil setecientos cuarenta y tres años. Yo, Don Francisco Montañes, Teniente General de esta jurisdicción, la de Cuicatlan y Papalo, por el General Don Francisco Cantón y Villarnea, Alcalde Mayor por S.M. de ellas, habiendo salido de este pueblo acompañado de los testigos de mí asistencia, del gobernador, alcaldes y demás oficiales de República de él y de los testigos de identidad, con Don Francisco de Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar, cacique y principal de este dicho pueblo, y de otros naturales para efecto de ampararle en las tierras de su cacicasgo, según se manda por su Alteza, Señores Presidente y Oidores de la Audiencia Real, que recide en la Ciudad de Mexico, en el despacho que principió estas diligencias. Guiado de dichos testigos, salimos de dicho pueblo y, caminando a la parte del norte por encima de unos cerros muy ásperos, llegamos a la cumbre de él. Y desde allí, dijeron dichos testigos, señalaban una mojonera que está en la cumbre de otro cerro muy alto, que por su aspereza no se pudo subir a él, y se llama en el idioma Chocho *Gaandudo*. Y dicha mojonera, que es una cruz, sirve de deslinde a los pueblos de Tepenene y Tequistepec de la jurisdicción de Teposcolula con las <tierras> de dicho cacique, quedando aquellas a la parte del poniente y las de este a la el oriente.

Y estando en dicho paraje y cumbre de dicho cerro, que en idioma se llama *Cutaxha*, presentes los oficiales de República de los expresados pueblos y otros naturales de ellos, requeridos por mí, dicho Teniente General, si tenían que contradecir a dicha

poseción, respondiendo que no. Cojiendo de la mano a dicho Don Francisco y paseándole por el paraje en nombre de S.M. (que Dios guarde) sin perjuicio de su Real derecho, ni del de otro tercero, le amparé y metí en poseción real y corporal, que aprendió en forma y conforme a derecho, arrancando yervas, tirando piedras y quebrando ramas, haciendo los demás actos que en semejantes casos se acostumbran, quedó en verdadera poseción. Y requeridos los expresados oficiales de dichos pueblos de Tepenene y Tequixtepec, con cuio consentimiento y sin contradición alguna, se le dio no inquieten ni perturben a dicho Don Francisco, ni sea despojado, sin ser primero oído y por fuero y derecho vencido, assi de este paraje y sitio como del primero, a que no se pudo ir por su asperesa. Y en este estado, el dicho Don Francisco del Rosario Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar me requirió, diciendo que respecto a estar inmediatos a dicho pueblo de Tequixtepec y tener en el centro de las de él dos caballerías de tierras de sembrar y un sitio de ganado menor que gozaron sus antepasados en virtud de la merced que me demostró. Y les fue fecha por el Excelentísimo Señor Marqués de Guadalcázar, Virrey, Gobernador y Capitán General, que fue de esta Nueva España, a los veintiún dias de el mes de Mayo de mil seiscientos y diez y seis años. Y pidió le amparen en uno y otro que visto por mí. Y estando presente Don Antonio de Córdoba, Gobernador actual de dicho pueblo de Tequixtepec, sus alcaldes y demás oficiales de República de él, entendidos de dicho pedimento y merced, dijeron ser como lo expresa el dicho Don Francisco y haber los gozado sus antepasados. Y están en términos de dicho su pueblo y al linde de las tierras de él, pegado a un cerro que en su idioma llaman *Theponaguastepec*, *Yxtlahuacan*, según y como más largamente se expresa en dicho merced, en cuya virtud, yo, dicho Teniente General, mandé a dicho Don António de Córdoba, los alcaldes y demás oficiales de República me guiasen al paraje donde están dichas caballerías de tierra, sitio de ganado menor. Y estando en él, el dicho gobernador y alcaldes dijeron ser aquel él que

han conocido por los causantes del expresado Don Francisco, quien dijo que en dicho paraje no podía haber dos caballerías de tierra y menos podía caber el sitio de ganado menor en donde demostraban, pero que dejándole su derecho a salvo para pedir lo que le convenga, por ahora le amparé en la posesión de dichas dos caballerías de tierra y sitio de ganado menor. Y habiendo yo, dicho Teniente General, requerido al dicho Don Antonio de Córdoba, Gobernador, su alcaldes y demás oficiales de República de dicho pueblo de Tequixtepec, con otros naturales que de él, él de Juxtlahuaca <y> Tepenene, se hayaron presentes, si tenían alguna contradicción que hacer o derecho que alegar. Habiendo respondido que no, tomé de la mano a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario de la Cruz y Salazar y en nombre de Su Majestad (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su real derecho, ni de el de otro tercero, paseándole por él, le di posesión de dichas dos caballerías de tierra y sitio de ganado menor, la que aprendió real y corporalmente sin contradicción de persona alguna. Habiendo hecho los actos demostrativos que para ellas se requieren, de arrancar yervas y tirar piedras, apercibiendo a dichos naturales de Tequixtepec, no inquieten, ni perturben a dicho Don Francisco de las dichas dos caballerías de tierra y sitio de ganado menor ni le despojen de él, sin que primero sea oído y por fuero y derecho vencido, de que entendidos dijeron lo ejecutarían así, declarando dicho Don Antonio de Córdoba, como gobernador de dicho pueblo, y en nombre de él, que las dichas dos caballerías de tierra y sitio de ganado menor no tiene por los cuatro vientos, más linderos que con las tierras de dicho su pueblo.

Y reproduciendo dicho Don Francisco de Santiago lo que al principio de esa diligencia tiene dicho, pasamos de aquí por el camino que va a Tepenene para el pueblo de Yxcatlan, guiándonos los testigos de identidad, por encima de una loma de encinos, caminando al rumbo del sur llegamos a una paraje y cruz que esta en un portesuelo que en idioma Chocho llaman *Cotagasu*, en donde la misma conformidad que en los

antecedentes y sin contradicción de persona alguna amparé en este paraje a dicho Don Francisco, quien hizo los mismos actos que en los otros.

Y desde aquí, caminando por la cima de unas lomas peladas y por el mismo rumbo del sur, guiados de dichos testigos, llegamos a un paraje que en dicho idioma se llama *Cuundurñ*, que en castellano dice “Palo Solo”. Y está a orillas del camino que va del pueblo de Yxcatlan al de Tequixtepec. Y en el mismo palo, que es un encino grande, mandé formar una cruz, que se hizo con un machete. Y en este dicho paraje amparé y puse en posesión a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario, presentes los gobernadores y alcaldes de los pueblos de Cuixtlahuaca y Tequixtepec, sin contradicción de ninguna persona, habiendo precedido en señal de ellas los actos de arrancar yervas y tirar piedras, que el derecho dispone, lo cual le di en nombre de S. M. (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su Real derecho, ni de otro tercero.

Y prosiguiendo por la cima de la misma loma y rumbo del sur, llegamos a un cerro y paraje que llaman El Mirador, y en dicho idioma *Cuunducteu*, donde amparé y metí en posesión a dicho Don Francisco en la misma conformidad que en los antecedentes, sin contradicción de persona alguna.

Y caminando por la expresada loma y rumbo, llegamos a una cruz que sirve de lindero y mojonera para deslindar las tierras y términos de la cabecera de Cuixtlahuaca, Tequixtepec y dicho Don Francisco. Y estando presentes los gobernadores, alcaldes y demás oficiales de República de ellos, siendo requeridos si tenían que contradecir o alegar a su derecho, dijeron que no. Por lo cual en nombre de S. M. (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su Real derecho, ni del de otro tercero, amparé y metí en posesión al expresado Don Francisco en este sitio y paraje. Y para ello, cojiendole de la mano le pasee por él. Y en señal de verdadera posesión que aprendió real y corporalmente hizo los actos demostrativos de arrancar yervas, tirar piedras y cortar ramas. Y habiendola

tomado quita y pacíficamente y sin contradicción alguna, notifiqué a dichos gobernadores y alcaldes no inquieten, perturben, ni molesten a dicho Don Francisco en el goce de sus tierras, ni le despojen de ellas, sin que primero sea oído y por fuero y derecho vencido de que entendidos. Dijeron lo harán assi y que lo que de que dicha cruz sirve de deslinde y amojonameinto de las tierras de dichos sus pueblos con las de dicho Don Francisco, cayendo las de este a la parte del oriente y las suyas al las del poniente.

En cuio estado, por ser ya muy tarde, mandé suspender esta diligencia para proseguirla el día de mañana. Y para que conste lo firmé con los testigos de mí asistencia, con quienes actuo como Juez Receptor, por falta de Escribano Público, ni real, que no le hay en estas jurisdicciones ni en el termino que dispone el derecho. =Francisco Montañes = Testigo Matías Antonio Flores = Testigo Jose Manuel de Campos.

Estando en el campo y paraje que llaman *La Cañada del Clavo* para proseguir estas diligencias a dos dias del mes de Abril de mil setecientos cuarenta y tres años, yo, dicho Teniente General, en prosecución de ellas, acompañado de los testigos de mí asistencia y de los de identidad, con otros muchos naturales, oficiales de República assi del pueblo de Yxcatlan, como de los otros citados, guiado de dichos testigos caminamos por unos montes muy altos y pelados y por el rumbo del oriente. Subimos a uno en cuia cima esta una cruz mediata al camino que viene del pueblo de Huautla al de Cuixtlahuaca de la jurisdicción de Teposcolula. Y sirve de deslinde y mojonera de las tierras de dichos dos pueblos y dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar. Estando presentes los gobernadores y alcaldes de dichos pueblos, siendo requeridos por mí, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían que contradecir o representar acerca de la posesión que se iba a dar a dicho Don Francisco, respondieron que no tenían cosa ninguna que alegar. Con cuia respuesta, cojí a dicho Don Francisco de la mano y, paseándole por aquel sitio en

nombre de Su Majestad (que Dios guarde), y sin perjuicio de su real derecho, ni de otro tercero, le amparaba y amparé en la posesión de este sitio, la que aprendió real y corporalmente sin contradicción de persona alguna. Y en señal de ella hizo los actos demostrativos de arrancar yervas, tirar piedras y cortar palos, que el derecho dispone. Y notifiqué a los oficiales de República de los dichos pueblos no inquieten, ni perturben, a dicho Don Francisco, ni le disponen de este sitio y lindero de sus tierras sin que primero sea oído y por fuero y derecho vencido.

Y caminando por encima de dichos cerros, mirando a la parte del oriente, bajamos a un paraje donde esta una cruz sobre una peña que divide los términos del pueblo nuevo de San Pedro Nodón con el de Huautla de dicha jurisdicción de Teposcolula. Y sirve de lindero y mojonera de las tierras de dicho Huautla con las del expresado Don Francisco del Rosario, por estar dicho pueblo nuevo fundado dentro de ellas. Y dicho paraje se llama en lengua misteca *Nuumnatahancagua*. Y estando presentes los oficiales de República de dicho pueblo de Huautla y los de dicho pueblo de Nodón, requeridos por mí, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían que contradecir o alegar sobre dicho posesión que se iba a dar a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario, dijeron que no, porque siempre han reconocido por lindero de dicho su pueblo con las tierras de dicho Don Francisco de la cruz y paraje en que estamos. En cuya conformidad, según y como en los antecedentes amparé y metí en posesión el expresado Don Francisco en este dichoparaje. Habiendo hecho los actos demostrativos que en los antecedentes, y sin contradicción de persona alguna, quedando notificados dichos oficiales de Huautla, no inquieten ni perturben a dicho Don Francisco ni le despojen sin que primero sea oído y por fuero y derecho vencido.

Y desde aquí caminamos por encima de unos cerros muy ásperos, siguiendo el mismo rumbo del oriente, llegamos al el *Pueblo Viejo de San Pedro Nodón*. Y detrás de

la iglesia que era dicho pueblo está un paderon de piedra que dijeron servia de lindero a las tierras de dicho Don Francisco con los pueblos de dicho Huautla y Jocotipaque, quedando estas a la parte del sur y las de dicho Don Francisco a la del Norte. Y estando presentes los oficiales de República de uno y otro pueblo, siendo requeridos por mí, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían que alegar o contradecir a la posesión que se iba a dar al expresado Don Francisco, dijeron que no. En cuia conformidad, cojiendolo de la mano y paseándole por este paraje en nombre de S. M. (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su Real derecho, ni de otro tercero, le amparaba y amparé en la posesión de este sitio y lindero, donde mandé poner tres cruces que sirvan de deslinde a los dichos dos pueblos y tierras de dicho Don Francisco, quien habiendo hecho los actos demostrativos de arrancar yervas, tirar piedras y cortar palos, aprendió dicha posesión real y corporal sin contradicción de persona alguna. Y notifiqué a dichos oficiales no le inquieten ni perturben en ella, ni menos le despojen sin ser primero oído y por fuero y derecho vencido.

Y caminando desde aquí por encima de unos cerros y lomas peladas y por el rumbo del norte, llegamos a un paraje donde esta una cruz mediata al camino real que va del pueblo de San Pedro Nodón a la cabecera de Cuicatlan. Y sirve de lindero con el pueblo de Xocotipaque, donde estando presente el gobernador y oficiales de el fueron requeridos por mí, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían alguna contradicción o derecho que representar a dicha posesión. Y habiendo respondido que no, amparé en este lindero a dicho Don Francisco, según y como en los antecedentes, habiendo hecho todos aquellos actos que el derecho previene. Y la tomó sin contradicción alguna. Y dicho paraje llaman en su idioma misteco *Totonoño*. Y notifiqué a dichos oficiales no inquieten, ni despojen, a el dicho Don Francisco sin que primero sea oído y por fuero y derecho vencido.

Y bajando de aquí por unas lomas peladas y montes muy asperas llegamos a un paraje que llaman *Río Seco*. Y cae a la parte del oriente, donde, por ser tarde y no poder proseguir, deje en este estado esta diligencia para hacerlo el día de mañana. Y para que conste la firmé con los testigos de mí asistencia, actuando como dicho es por la razón expresada. = Francisco Montañez = Matías Antonio Flores = José Manuel de Campos.

En el campo y paraje nombrado Río Seco a tres días de dicho mes y año, yo, dicho Teniente General, en prosecución de estas diligencias y amparo de tierras que se manda hacer por su Alteza a Don Francisco del Rosario Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar, cacique y principal del pueblo de Yxcatlan de la jurisdicción de Cuicatlan, guiado de los testigos de identidad, salimos de él. Y caminando por unos cerros muy empinados y ásperos, llegamos a encontrar el camino real que viene del Trapiche de Guenocilain por Vueltas Secas al río del Salado. Y siguiendo dicho camino, llegamos al paraje de *Quiotepeque El Viejo*, en donde estaban los oficiales de República de dicho pueblo de Quiotepeque El Nuevo y Joachin de Monjaras, Cacique y Principal de el. Y recombenidos por mí, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían qu contradecir o alegar sobre la poseción que se iba a dar a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar, dijeron que no tenían que contradecir. En cuya virtud, tomando de la mano a dicho Don Francisco y paseándole por el sitio y paraje que llaman Quiotepeque el viejo, en nombre de su Majestad (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su real derecho, ni de otro tercero, le amparaba y amparé en él. Y en señal de verdadera poseción que aprendió real y corporalmente, hizo los actos demostrativos que el derecho previene de arrancar yervas, tirar piedras y cortar ramas. Y mandé a unos y otros pusiesen una cruz que sirviera de mojonera. Por ahora interin, la hacían de cal y canto. Y notifiqué a dichos oficiales y

cacique no inquieten, ni perturben, ni despojen, al dicho Don Francisco sin que primero sea oído y por fuero y derecho vencido.

Y desde aquí, caminando al norte, sirviendonos de linde el camino real que viene de Tecomavaca a Quiotepeque, llegamos a un paraje grande, que tambien viene de Vueltas Secas para el río Salado. Y esta y cae entre oriente y norte, el qual llaman en su idioma *Nahoturhec*, donde estaban los oficiales de República del pueblo Tecomavaca, el de Quiotepeque y dicho Cacique Don Joachin de Monjaras. Y siendo requeridos unos y otros sobre si tenían que contradecir o alegar cerca de dicha posesión, dijeron que no. Y habiendo tomado de la mano a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar, le amparé en ella en la misma conformidad que en la antecedente, haciendo los mismos actos, que el derecho previene, todo sin contradicción de persona alguna, quieto y pacíficamente. Y mandé a unos y otros que en dicho paraje pusiesen una cruz con un monton de piedras, interin hacían una mojonera de cal y canto.

Y en este estado, por ser ya tarde, suspendí esta diligencia para proseguirla el día de mañana. Y para que conste la firmé con los testigos de mí asistencia, actuando como dicho es, por la razón expresada. = Francisco Montañes = Matías Antonio Flores = Jose Manuel de Campos.

Estando en el campo y paraje grande que llaman de Vueltas Secas, mediate al río Salado, a cuatro dias del mes de Abril de mil setecientos cuarenta y tres años, yo, dicho Teniente General, en prosecución de estas diligencias salí de este paraje acompañado de los testigos de mí asistencia y guiado de los de identidad con los oficiales de República de los pueblos de Quiotepeque y Tecomavaca y su Cacique Don Joachin de Monjaras. Caminamos río adento por el rumbo del norte, sirviendo de lindero dicho río que llaman El Salado, dejando de mano izquierda y rumbo del poniente las tierras que pertenecen a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar. Y empiesen desde el expresado paraje

grande. Y llegamos a otro que en su idioma llaman *Toyuga*. Linde de las tierras del Reverendo Padre Pascual de Borrote, administrador del Trapiche nombrado San Nicolas Ayotla, de la Sagrada Compañía de Jesús, y caen a mano derecha y rumbo de oriente, sirviendo siempre de lindero dicho río Salado y paraje que llaman *El Carrizal*. Y siguiendo dicho río arriba al linde de las tierras de Don Domingo Narvaez, Cacique y Principal del pueblo de Los Cuez, llegamos a dicho paraje de *Toyuga*. En donde estaban sembrados unas milpas de los naturales de dicho pueblo de Los Cuez. Y estando presente dicho cacique, como gobernador, y sus alcaldes y demás oficiales, siendo requeridos por mi, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían que reconvenir o contradecir o alegar derecho a dichas tierras que tenían sembrados dijeron que no porque las reconocian propiedad ser y pertenecer a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar, como herederas de sus antepasados. En cuia conformidad, amparé en ellas al expresado Don Francisco en la misma forma que en las antecedentes y con los mismos actos que el derecho dispone.

Y siguiendo dicho río y rumbo llegamos a otro paraje nombrado en su idioma *Alcalaqui*, en donde se junta el río Xiquila con el Salado. Y prosiguiendo desde aquí este río adentro, llegamos a un paraje o cerrito llamado *Cometlapana*, dejando a mano izquierda y rumbo del norte las tierras pertenecientes a dicho Don Francisco de Rosario. Y desde aquí llegamos a otro paraje que llaman *Cuyuluapa*, en donde están tres caballerías de tierra pertenecientes a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario. Y son entre dicho río Salado y el de Xiquila y lindan por oriente con las tierras de dicho Trapiche y de la comunidad de Los Cuez, sirviendo de lindero dicho río Salado, y por poniente con sus mismas tierras y por el sur de la misma suerte u por el norte con tierras del pueblo de San Antonio Nanahuatipa, sirviendo de deslinde y mojonera a dichas tres caballerías que se hallan en *Cuyuluapa* el río de Calapa. Y estando presentes el Gobernador, Alcaldes y demás oficiales de República de dicho pueblo de San Antonio y su Cacique y Principal,

Don Manuel de Chavez, siendo requerido por mí, dicho Teniente General, sobre si tenían que alegar o contradecir a dicha posesión y tres caballerías de tierra en dicho paraje de Cuyuluapa, dijeron que no. Y tomando de la mano a dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar, le amparé en ellas con los mismos actos y en las misma conformidad que en las antecedentes, según y como lo previene el derecho, quieta y pacíficamente y sin contradicción de persona alguna.

Y siguiendo el rumbo entre norte y oriente, llegamos a otro paraje por dicho río de Xiquila, que es un cerrito donde esta pintado un cuerpo al parecer de indio, que en su idioma llaman *Binditeo*. Y desde aquí por el mismo rumbo y río llegamos a otro cerro donde esta pintado un pajar, *Totoltepec*. Y desde aquí siguiendo el mismo rumbo, llegamos a otro paraje que llaman de Santa Cruz, pueblo antiguo y depoblado, donde están dos huertas de arboles frutales pertenecientes a los causantes de dicho Don Francisco. Y reconvenidos por mí, dicho Teniente General, a dichos oficiales de República de dicho San Antonio, sobre si tenían que alegar o contradecir dicha posesión, respondido que no. Le amparé en ella y se la di al dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar en la misma conformidad y con los mismos acto que en las antecedentes, quieta y pacíficamente y sin contradicción de persona alguna.

Y por ser ya tarde, dejé esta diligencia en este estado para preseguida el día de mañana. Y para que conste la firmé con los testigos de mí asistencia, actuando como dicho es por la razón expresada. = Francisco Montañes = Matías Antonio Flores = Jose Manuel de Campos.

Estando en el campo y paraje del pueblo viejo y despoblado de Santa Cruz a cinco dias de dicho mes y año, yo, dicho Teniente General, en prosecucion de estas diligencias, salí de él acompañado de los testigos de mí asistencia y de los de identidad. Y

caminando por el rumbo del sur y cima de unas laderas peladas, llegamos a un paraje que llaman el pueblo viejo de San Miguel Nopala, que sirve de lindero de las tierras de San Antonio Nanaguatipa y pueblo de Tepenene. Y desde aquí, subiendo unos cerros muy ásperos y altos, llegamos a cerrar y encontrar con el primer lindero y cerro por donde empesamos, y en su idioma llaman *Nazu*, que esta frente de el que nombran *Gaandudo*, que cae al rumbo del norte. Y por haber tomado la primera poseción, pasamos de aquí a dos sitios por encima de unos cerros que caen al oriente, pegado al pueblo de Ixcatlan, cuja merced demostró Don Francisco del Rosario. Y estando en el centro y términos del pueblo de Yxcatlan, dada por el Excelentísimo Señor Marqués de Cadereita, Virrey, Gobernador y Capitán General, que fue de esta Nueva España a los diez y ocho dias de el mes de Septiembre de mil seiscientos treinta y seis años, para que dentro de sus mismas tierras pueda tener doscientos yeguas y doscientos vacas. En cuyos sitios, por no tener colindantes ningunos que puedan contradecir su poseción, estando presentes el gobernador y demás oficiales de República del pueblo de Ixcatlan, tomando de la mano a dicho Don Francisco, paseándole por dicho sitios en nombre de Su Majestad (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su real derecho, ni del otro tercero, le amparaba y amparé en los expresados dos sitios, de los cuales aprendió poseción real y corporal haciendo los actos demostrativos de arrancar yervas, tirar piedras y cortar ramas, que el derecho previene.

Y desde aquí pasamos a dicho pueblo y cabecera de Yxcatlan, donde guiados de dicho gobernador y oficiales fuimos a la casa y solar que llaman *Teepam*. Y estando en ella, tomando de la mano a dicho Don Francisco en nombre de Su Majestad (que Dios guarde) y sin perjuicio de su real derecho, ni del de otro tercero, le amparé y metí en poseción de ella, la cual tomó quieta y pacíficamente sin contradición alguna, haciendo los actos demostrativos de cerrar puertas y ventanas, hechar afuera a los que estaban

dentro, volver las a abrir y entrar, en señal de verdadera posesión que aprendió real y corporalmente.

Y desde aquí, guiado de dichos oficiales, pasamos a un solar que esta inmediato al calvario de este dicho pueblo que por la parte del norte linda con solar que fue de Pascual de Santiago, por la del sur con dicho calvario, por la del oriente con un solar de la cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Natividad, y por el poniente con el que fue de Bernabé de Villegas. Y habiendo hecho en dicho solar los mismos actos de posesión que el antecedente, no teniendo, como dijo, no tener otra parte a donde pasar ni otras tierras ni solares en dicho pueblo que demostrar el dicho Don Francisco del Rosario y Salazar, yo, dicho Teniente General, concluí estas diligencias de posesión y amparo de tierras. Y las firmé con los testigos de mí asistencia, con quienes actuo como Juez Receptor por la razón expresado. = Francisco Montanes = Matías Antonio Flores = Jose Manuel de Campos

En el pueblo y cabecera de Yxcatlan a seis dias del mes de Abril de mil setecientos cuarenta y tres años, yo, Don Francisco Montanes, Teniente General de esta jurisdicción, la de Cuicatlan y Papalo, por ausencia y nombramiento del General Don Francisco Cantón y Villarnea, Alcalde Mayor por su Majestad de ella, habiendo visto estas diligencias fechas a pedimento de Don Francisco del Rosario y Santiago de la Cruz y Salazar, cacique y principal de este dicho pueblo en virtud de la Real provisión que las principia, mandada librar por su Alteza, los Señores Presidente y Oidores de la Real Audiencia de esta Nueva España, en la que se previene que fechas y conclusas originales se le entreguen a dicho Don Francisco para en guarda de su derecho. Y cumpliendo en todo con el contenido de dicha real provicion, debia mandar y mando que estando como estan, conclusas se le entreguen originales del expresado Don Francisco del Rosario y

Salazar, para que use de ellas donde y como le convenga. Y por este auto assi lo provei mandé y firmé con los testigos de mí asistencia actuando como Juez Receptor por falta de escribano público, ni real, que no le hay en esta jurisdicción, ni en el termino que previene el derecho. = Francisco Montañes = Matías Antonio Flores = Jose Manuel de Campos

Van estas diligencias en trinta y dos fojas, las treint utiles y las dos blancas. Y para que conste, puse razón que rubriqué.

Figures



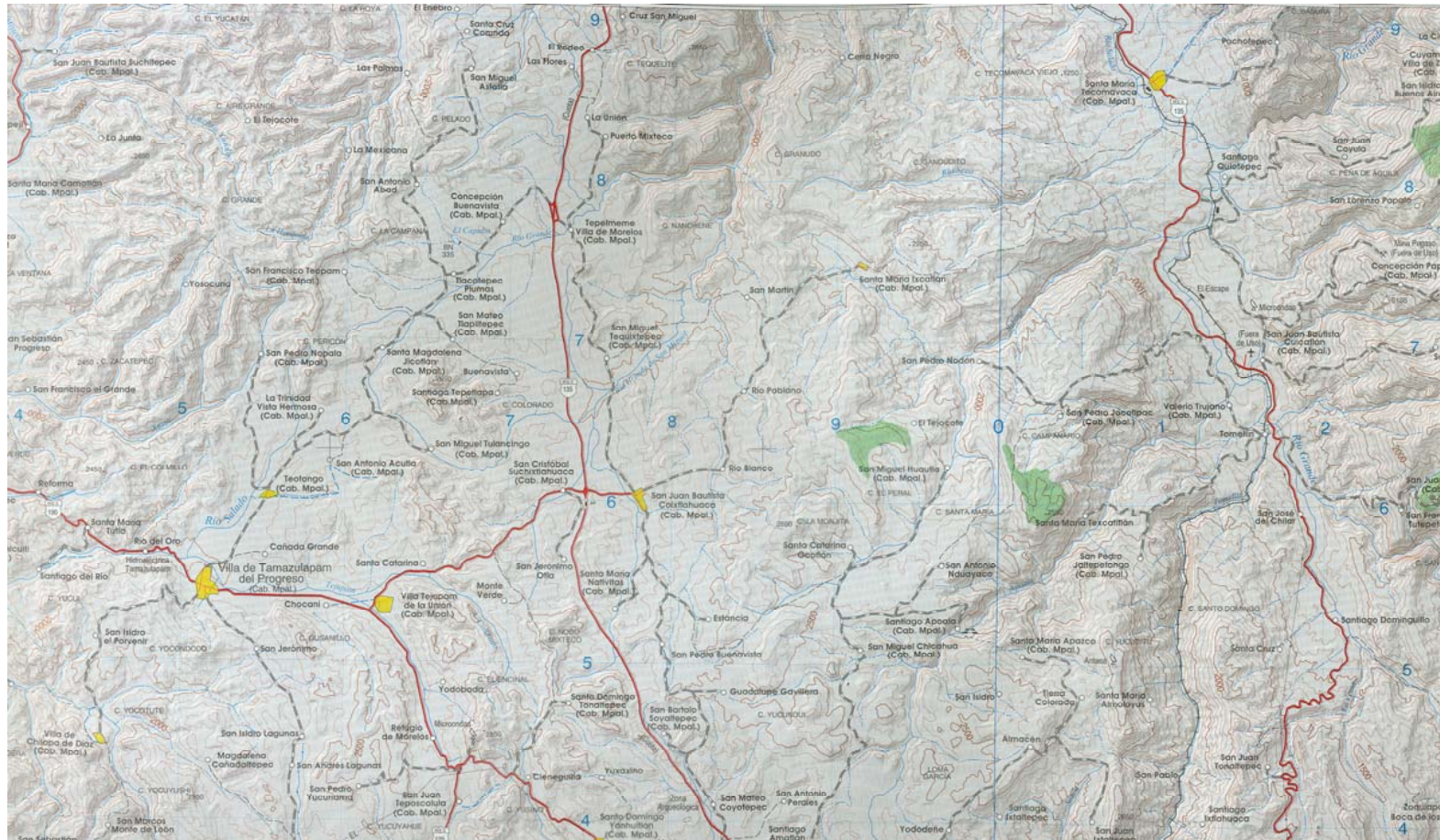


Figure 1. Road map of Northern Oaxaca.



Figure 3. View of Santa María Ixcatlan with El Mirador and Cerro Flor in the background.



Figure 4. View west towards Guautla and Nodón.



Figure 5. Meadow at La Cumbre in the highlands of Ixcatlan.



Figure 6. View from Montañita to the Río Xuquila.

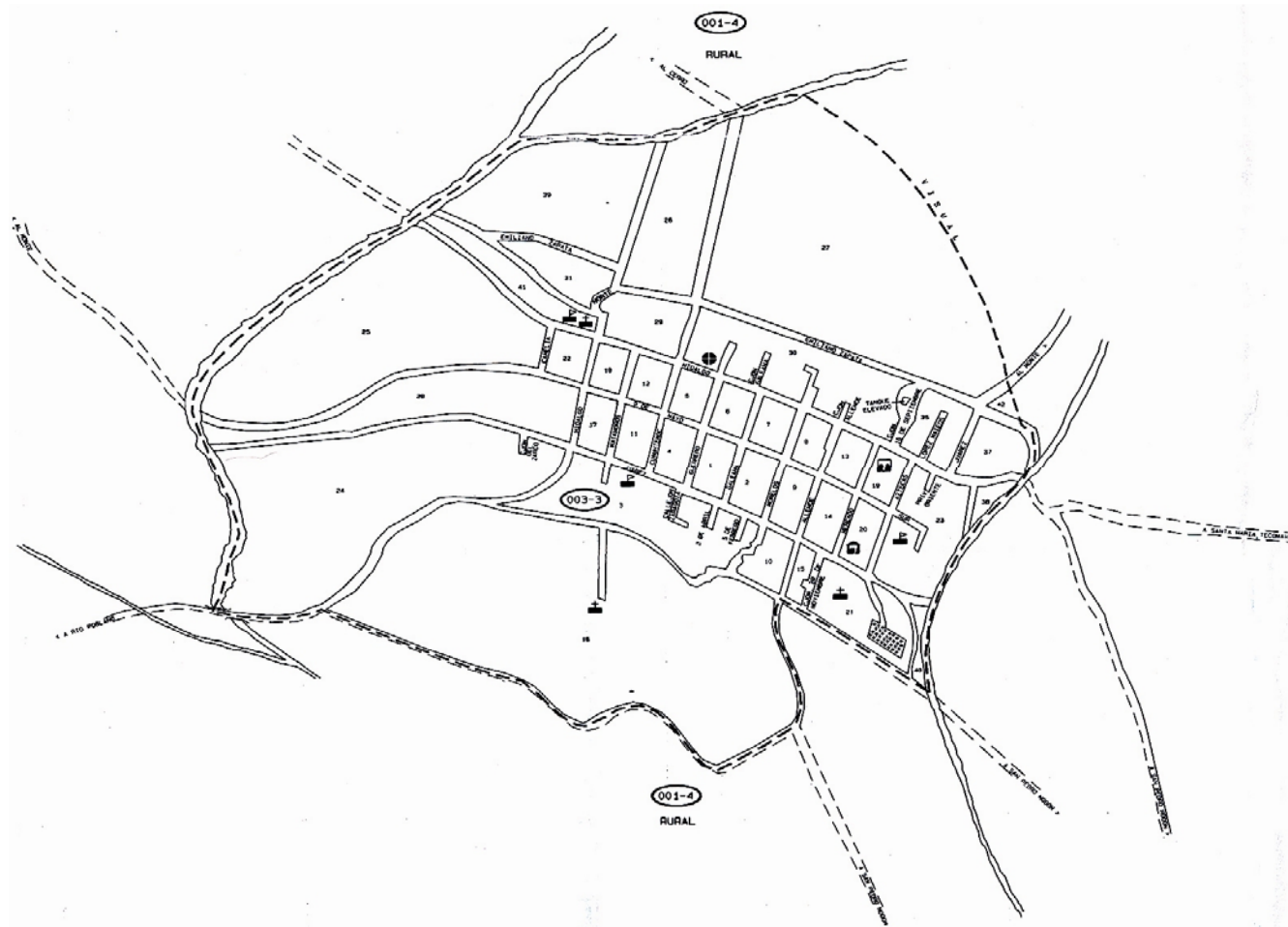


Figure 7. Stree plan of Santa María Ixcatlán. (INEGI)



Figure 8. The middle street of Ixcatlan as seen from the plaza.



Figure 9. The church of Santa María Ixcatlan.



Figure 10. A view through town.



Figure 11. The plaza of Santa María Ixcatlan.

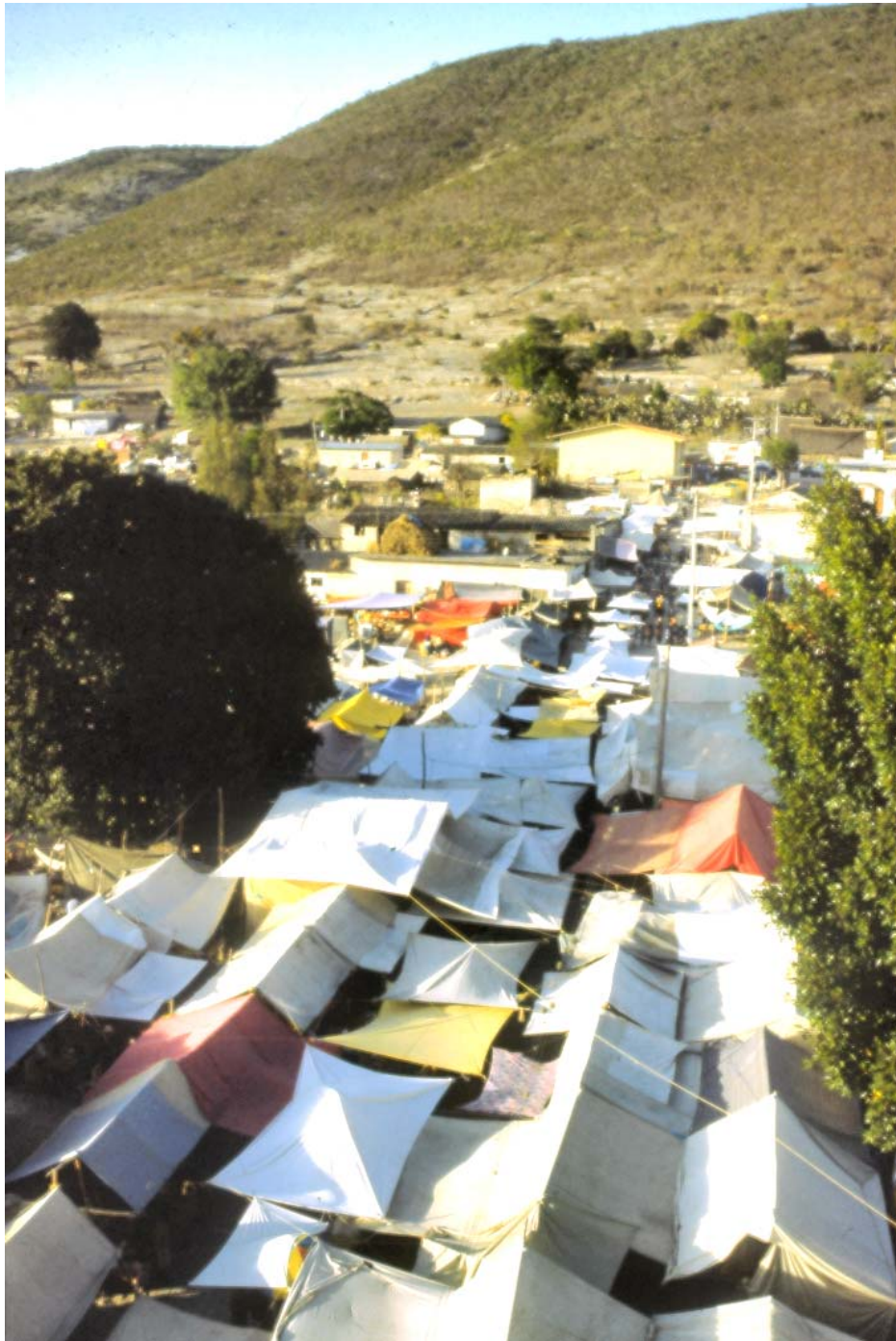


Figure 12. The market during Cuarto Viernes.



Figure 13. The procession of El Señor de las Tres Caídas on Cuarto Viernes.



Figure 14. El Señor de las Tres Caídas.



Figure 15. San Ramón on Palm Sunday.



Figure 16, The Virgin of Sorrows on Good Friday.



Figure 17. Todos Santos in Santa María Ixcatlan.



Figure 18. The evening of Todos Santos.



Figure 19. The native palm used in weaving.



Figure 20. Woman weaving palm hat.



Figure 21. The lake at La Cumbre.

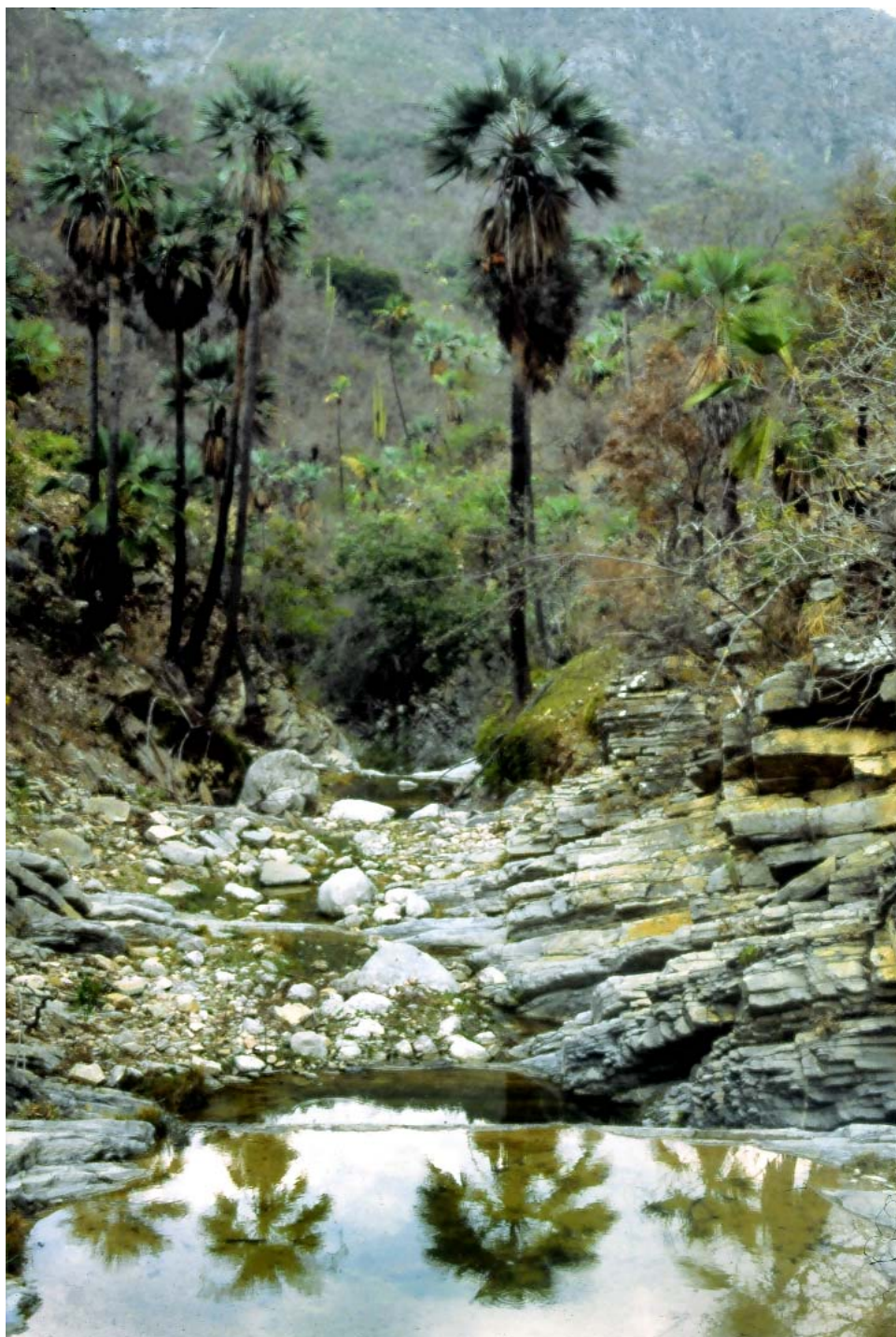


Figure 22. The spring at Ma Paso.

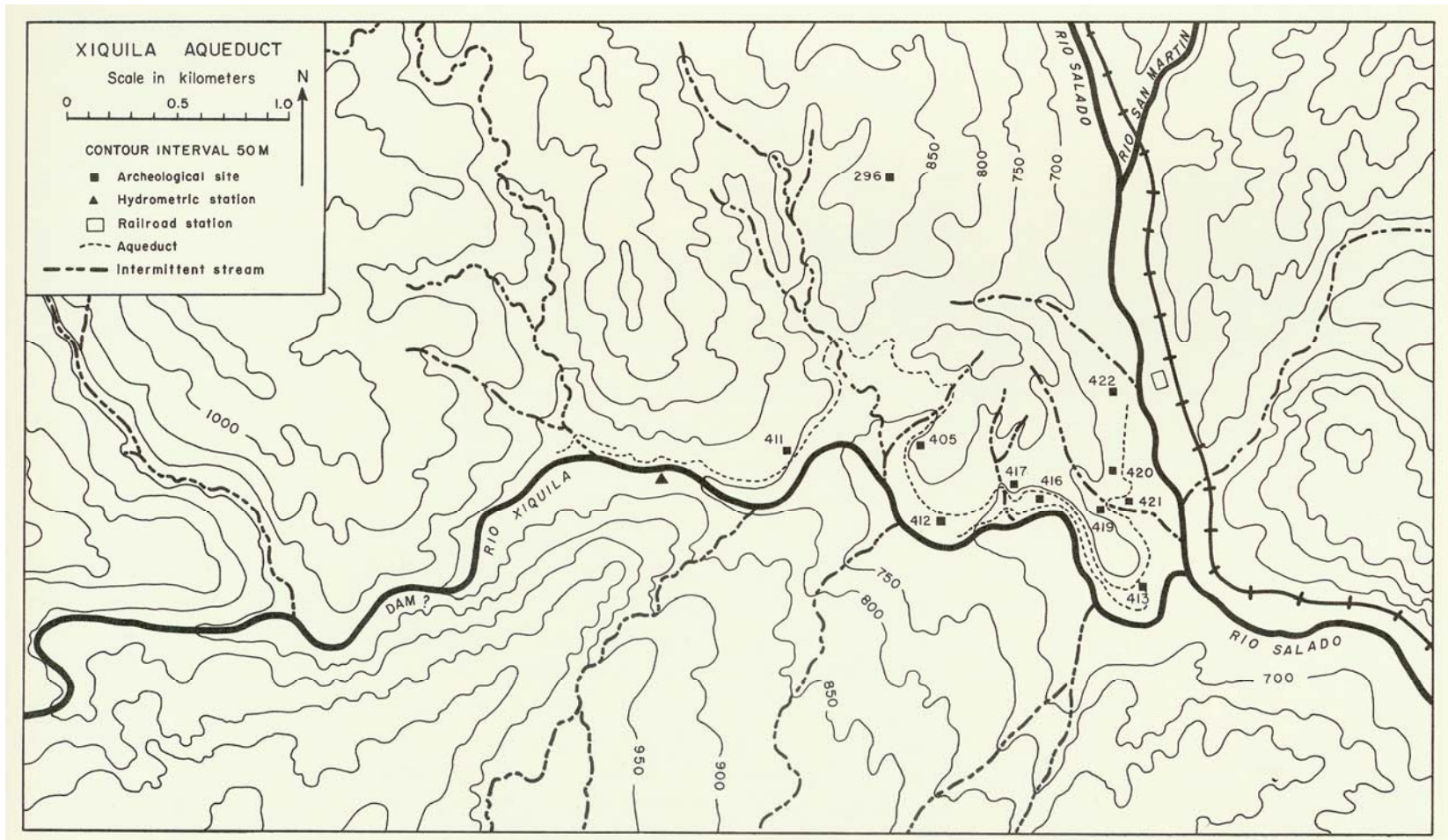


Figure 23. Archaeological sites along the Río Xuquila. (After Woodbury and Neely, 1972)



Figure 24. A cross channel dam.



Figure 25. Section of a cross channel dam.



Figure 26. Terraces in the vicinity of El Palmar.



Figure 27. Loma de los Muertos from Culebrón.



Figure 28. Loma de los Muertos from Mal Paso.



Figure 29. Pyramid structure on Loma de los Muertos.



Figure 30. Front view of a pyramid on Loma de los Muertos.



Figure 31. Pictographs below Loma de los Muertos.



Figure 32. Pictograph at cave below Loma de los Muertos.



Figure 33. Pyramid at La Muralla.



Figure 34. Wall of the ceremonial precinct at La Muralla.



Figure 35. Figures of a flint knif and heart from La Muralla.



Figure 36. Figures of hand and skull at La Muralla.

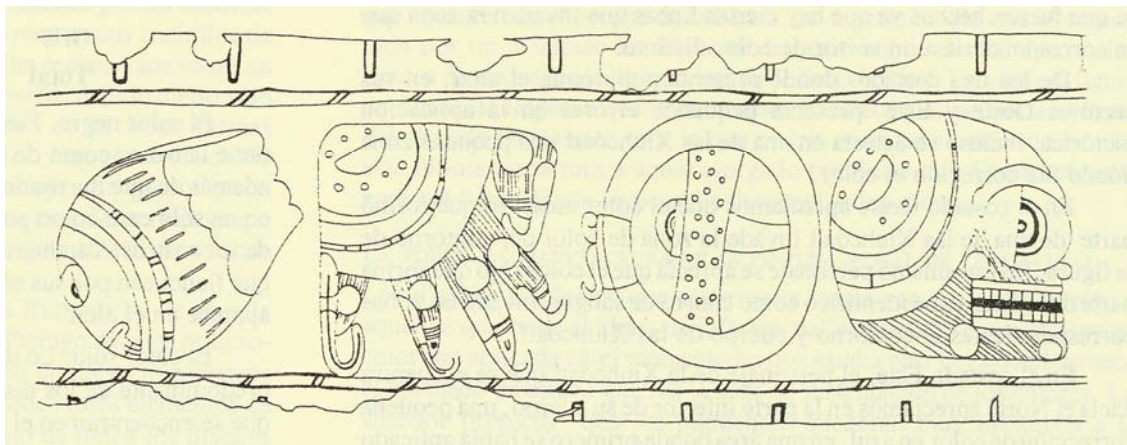
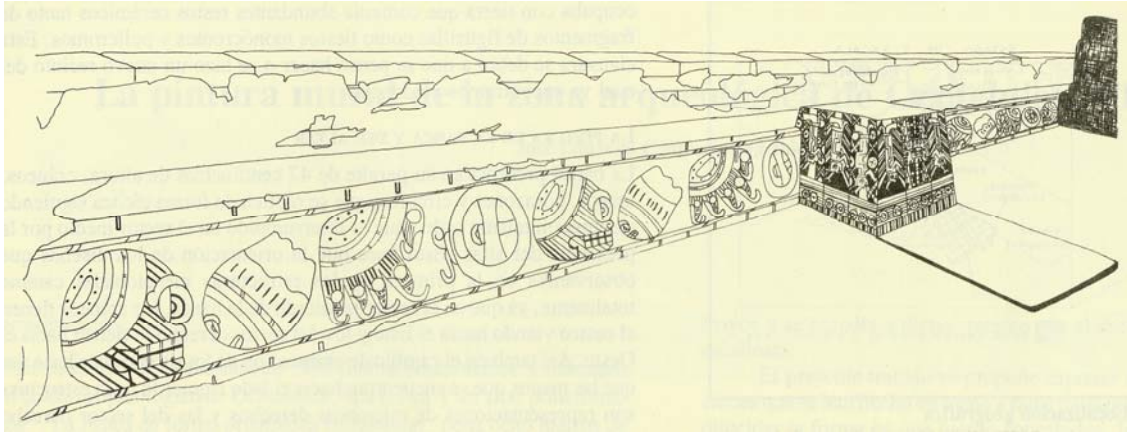


Figure 37. Murals at Ocotololco, Tlaxcala. (After Contreras, 1993)

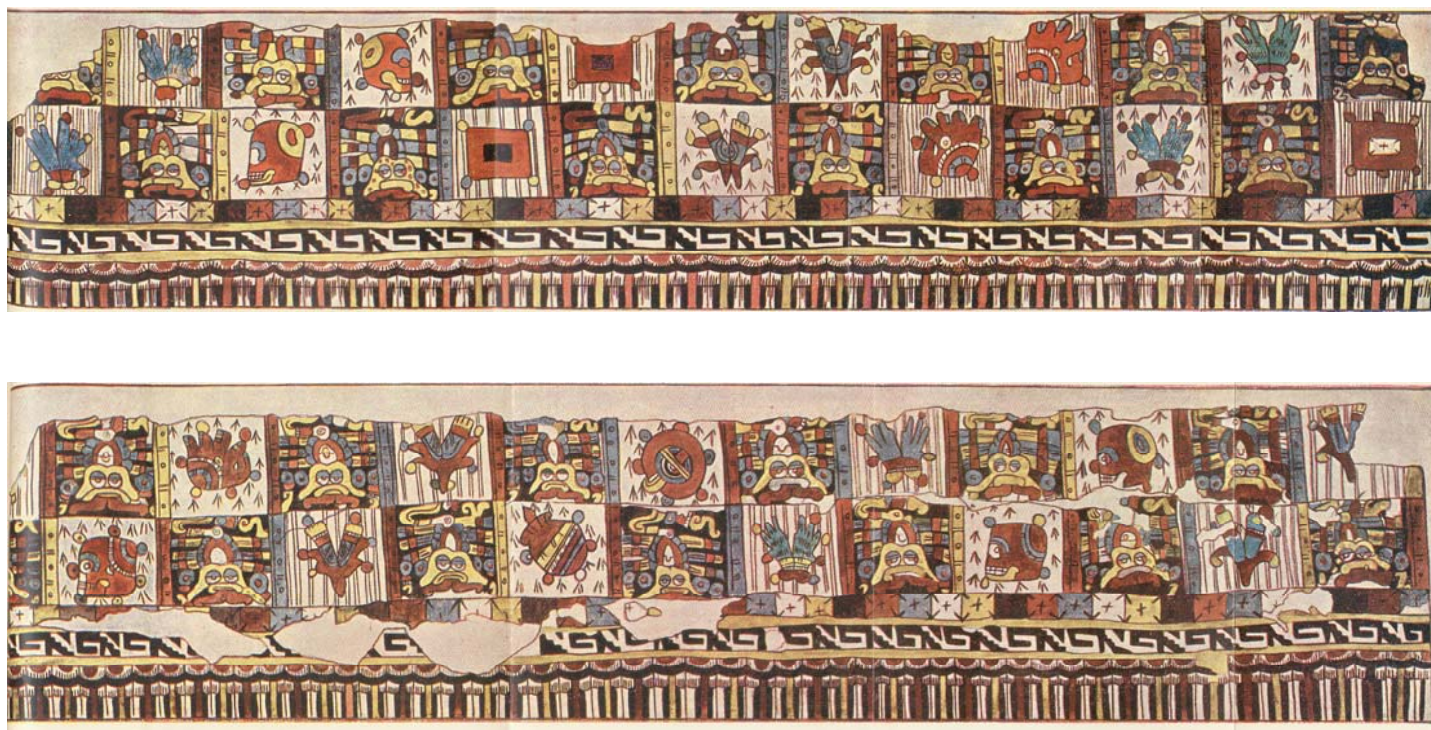


Figure 38. Painted murals at Tizatlan, Tlaxcala. (After Noguera, 1929)

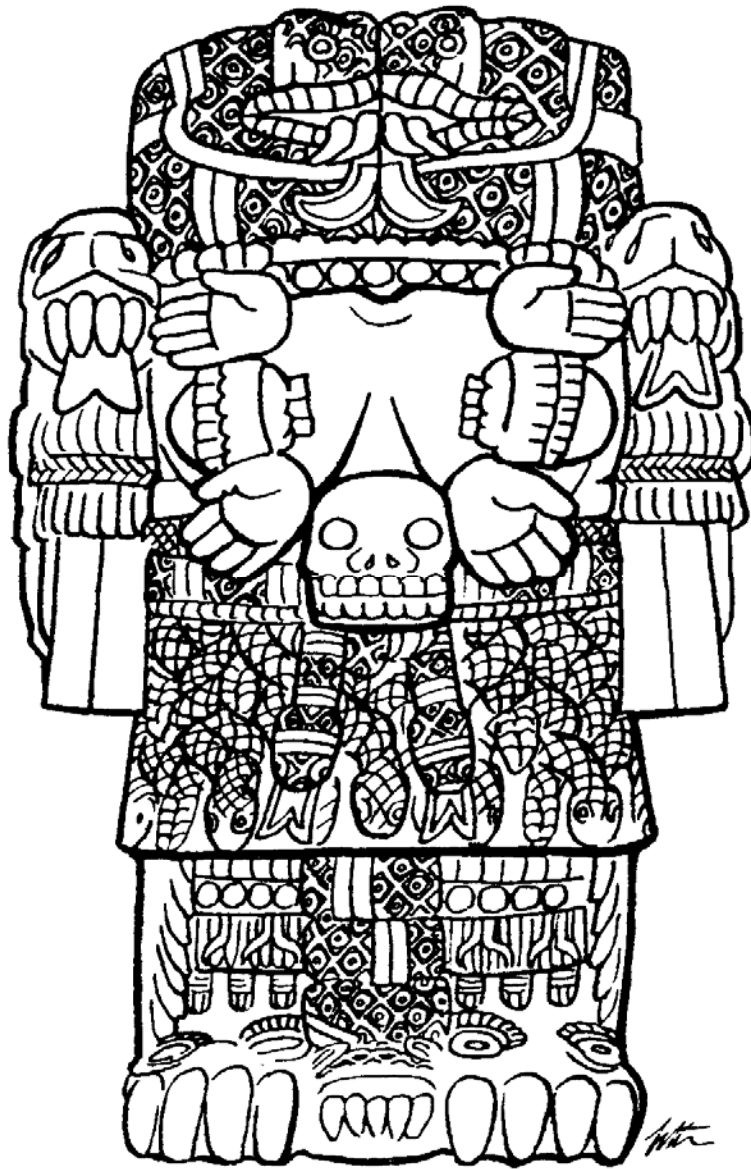


Figure 39. Coatlicue with a necklace of hands, hearts and skulls.



Figure 40. Tzitzimine from the Codex Magliabechiano.



Figure 41. Polychrome vase in the Museo Nacional de Antropología.



Figure 42. Relación geográfica de Ixcatlan, Map A. (JGI XXIV-7)



Figure 43. Close up of Map A from the relación geográfica de Ixcatlan.

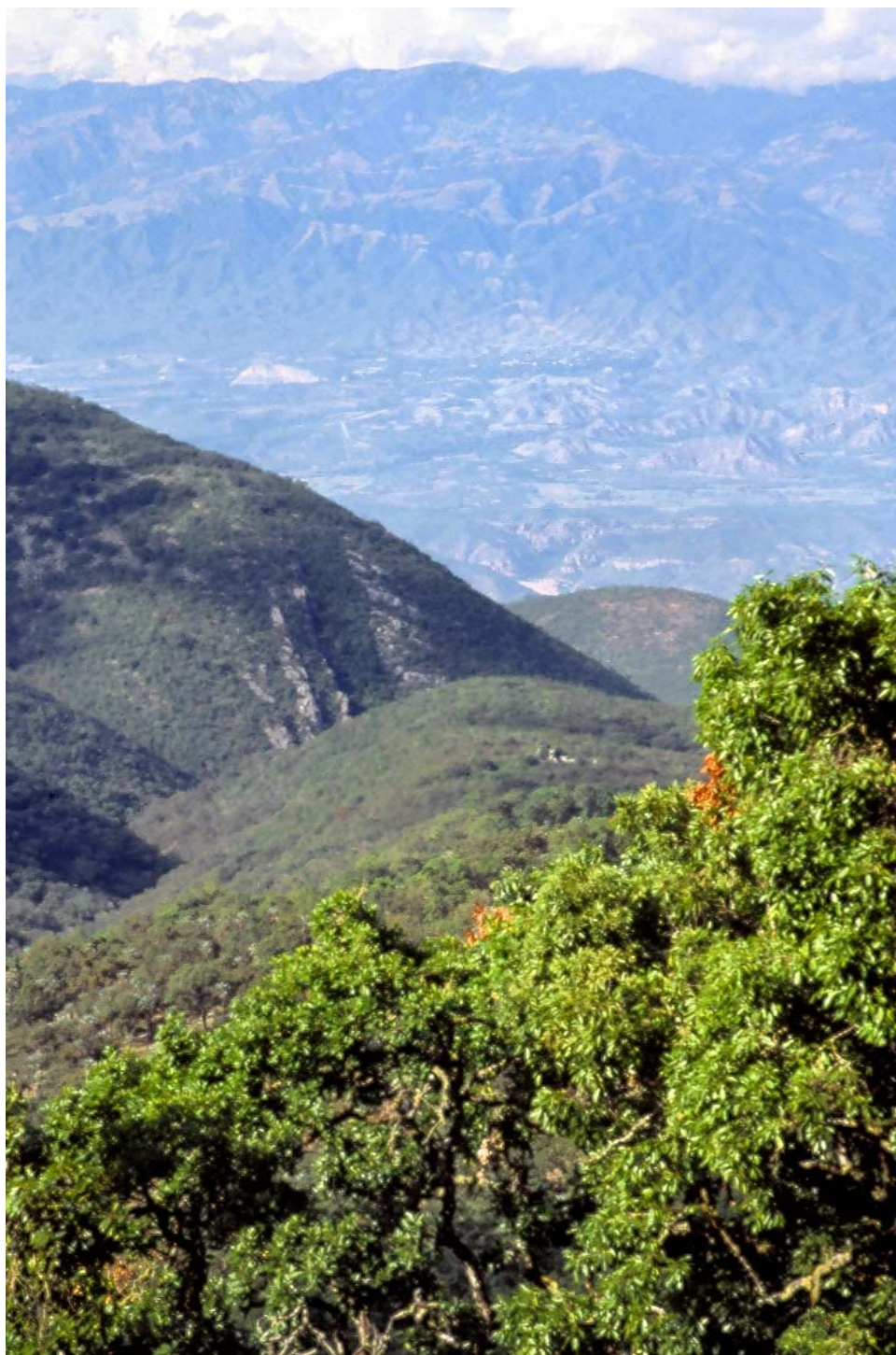


Figure 45. View of San Miguel Nopala.



Figure 46. Ruins of the church at San Miguel Nopala.



Figure 47. An outer wall at San Miguel Nopala.



Figure 48. Rooms associated with the church at San Miguel Nopala.

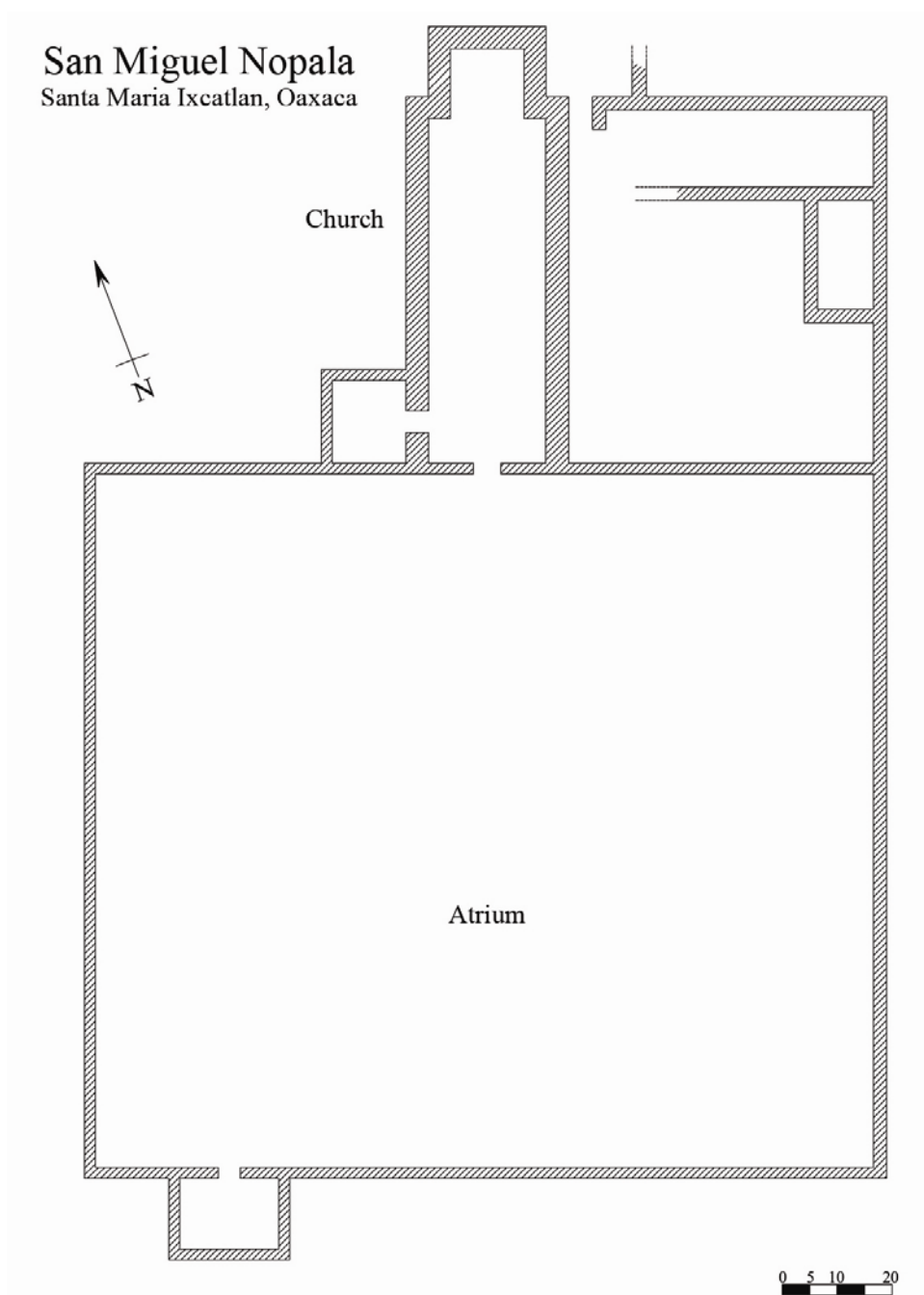


Figure 49. Plan of the church at San Miguel Nopala. (by the author.)

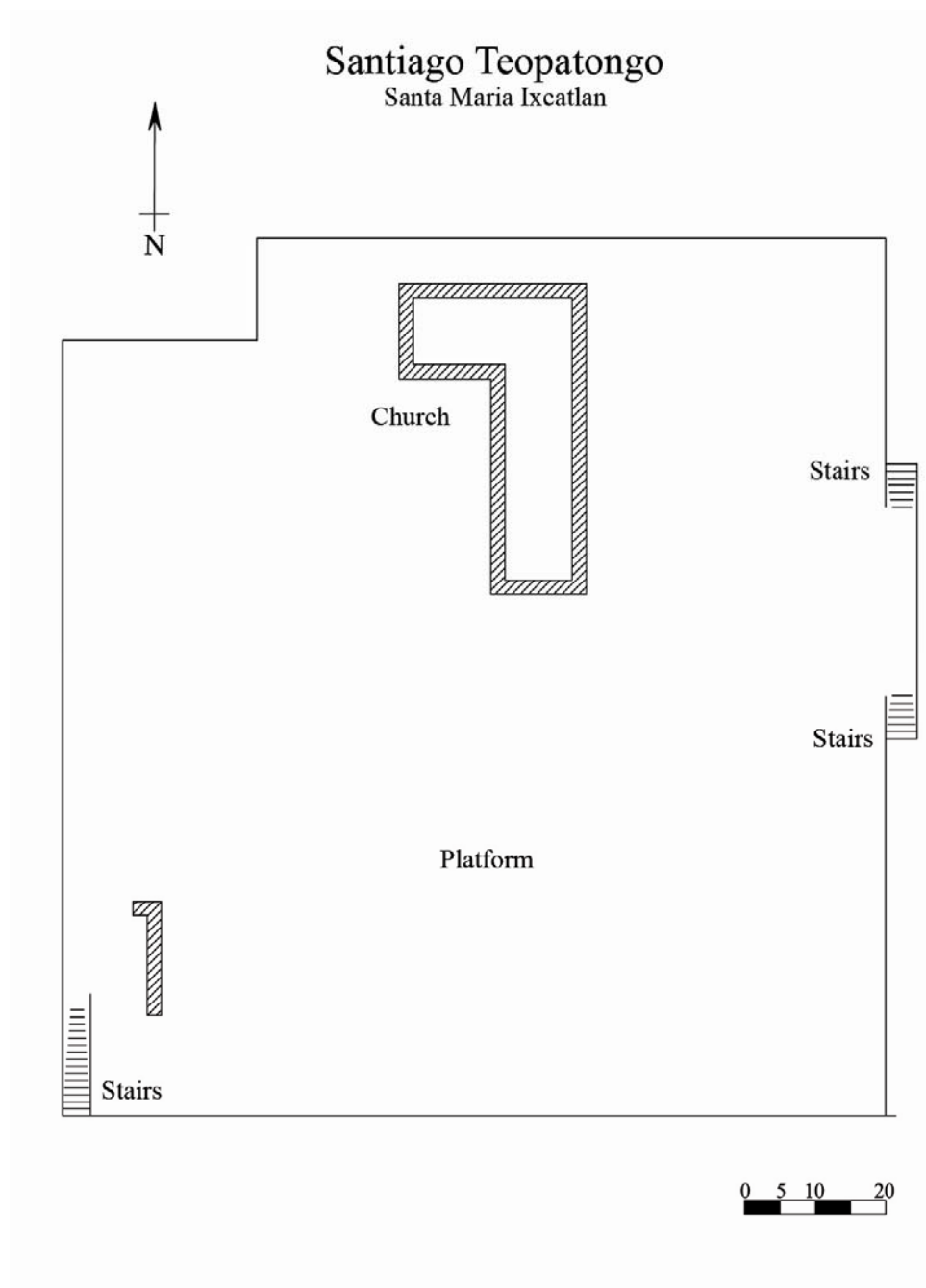


Figure 50. Plan of the church and platform at Teopatongo. (by the author)



Figure 51. The platform wall of the church at Teopatongo.



Figure 52. View of the Río Santiago from Teopátongo.

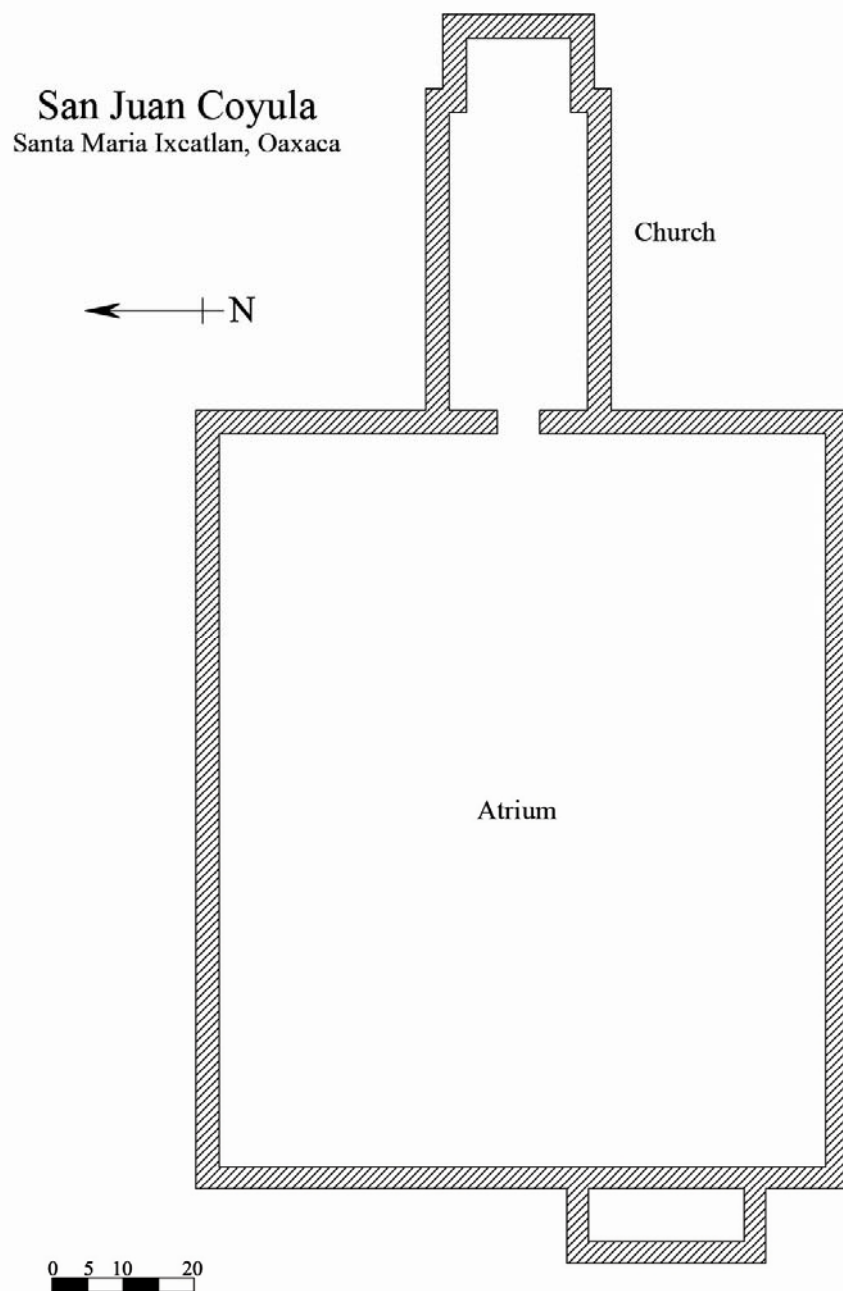


Figure 53. Plan of the church at San Juan Coyula. (by the author)

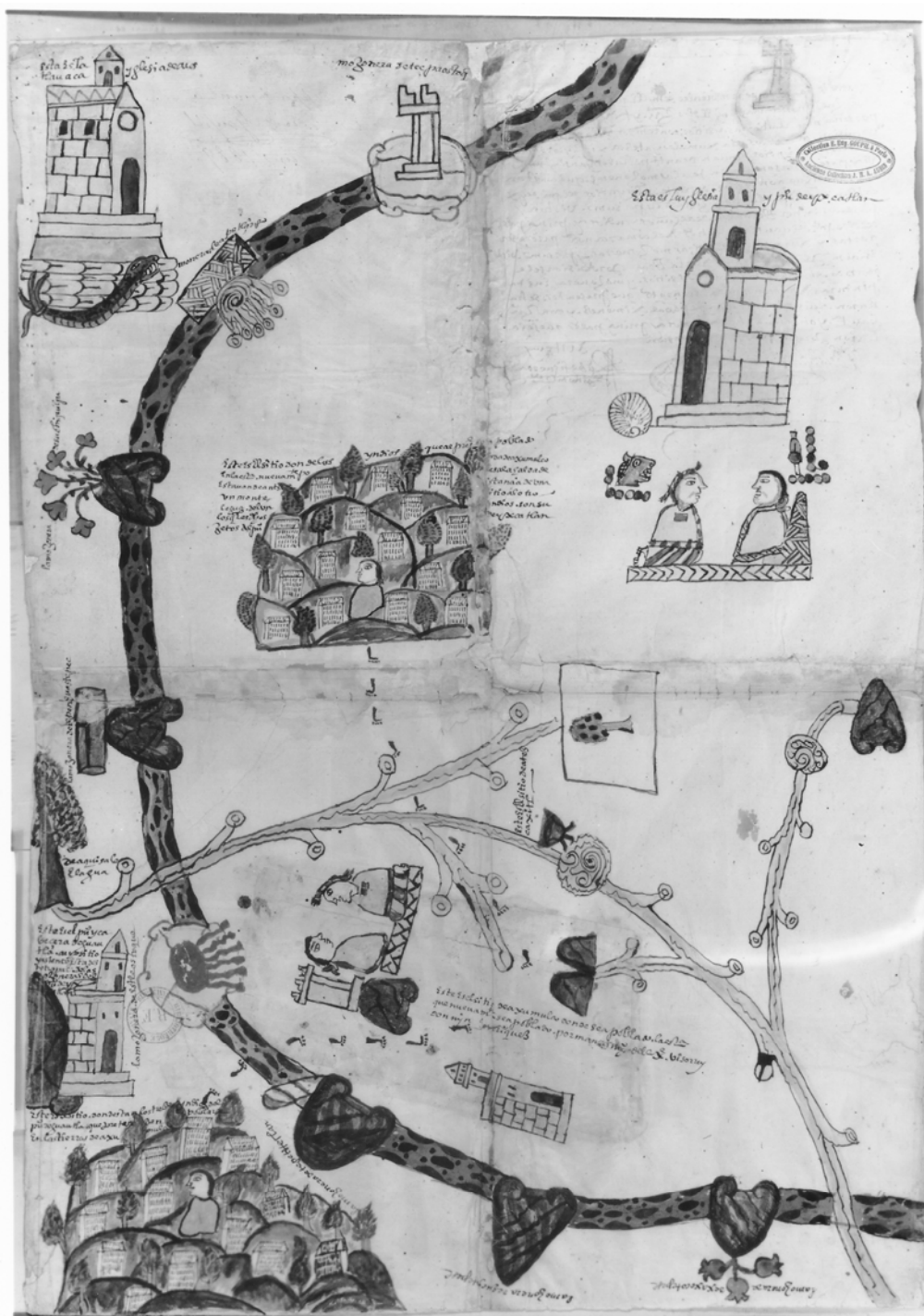


Figure 55. Plan topographique d'Ixcatlan. (BNP)

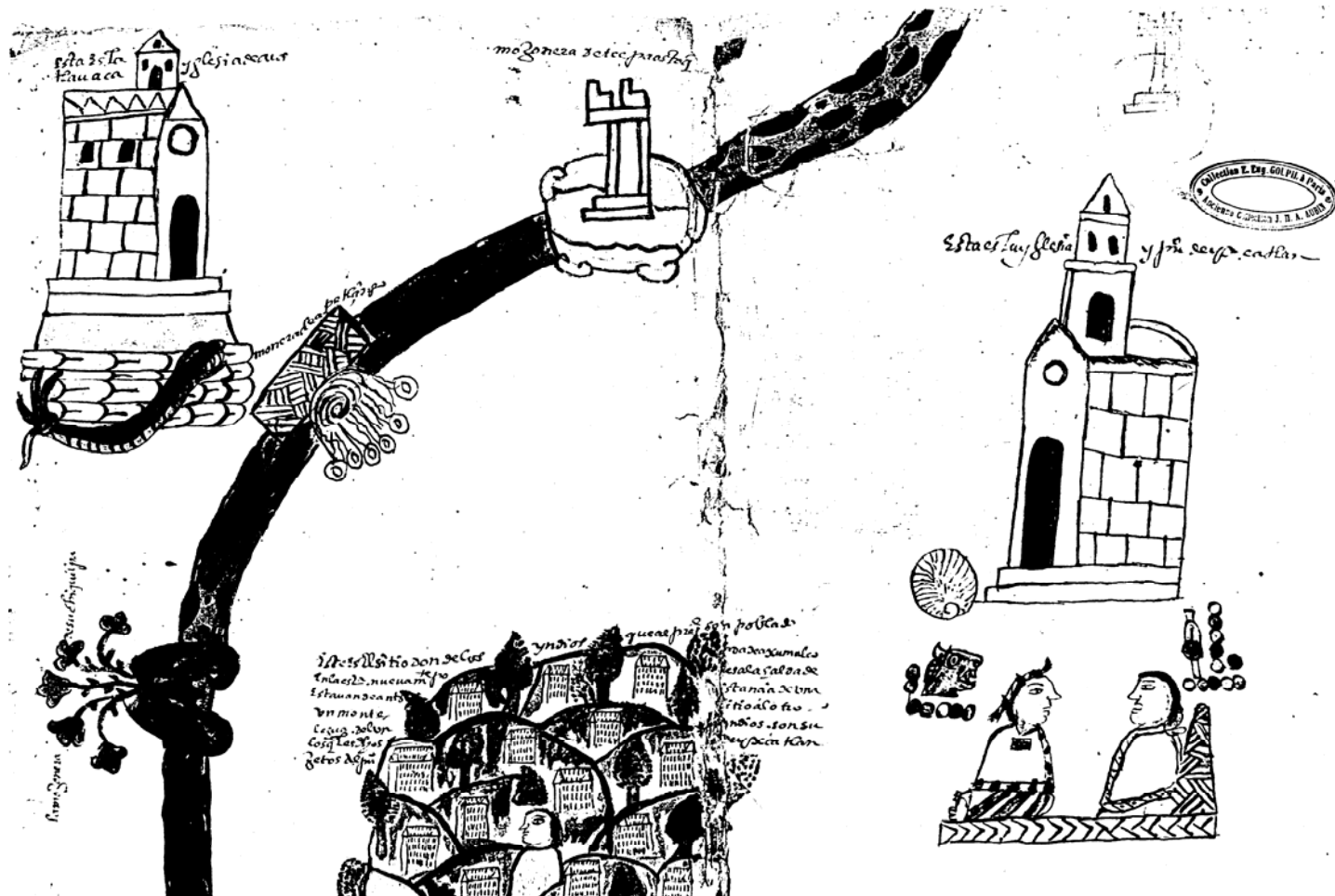


Figure 56. Upper portion of the Plan topographique d'Ixcatlan. (BNP)

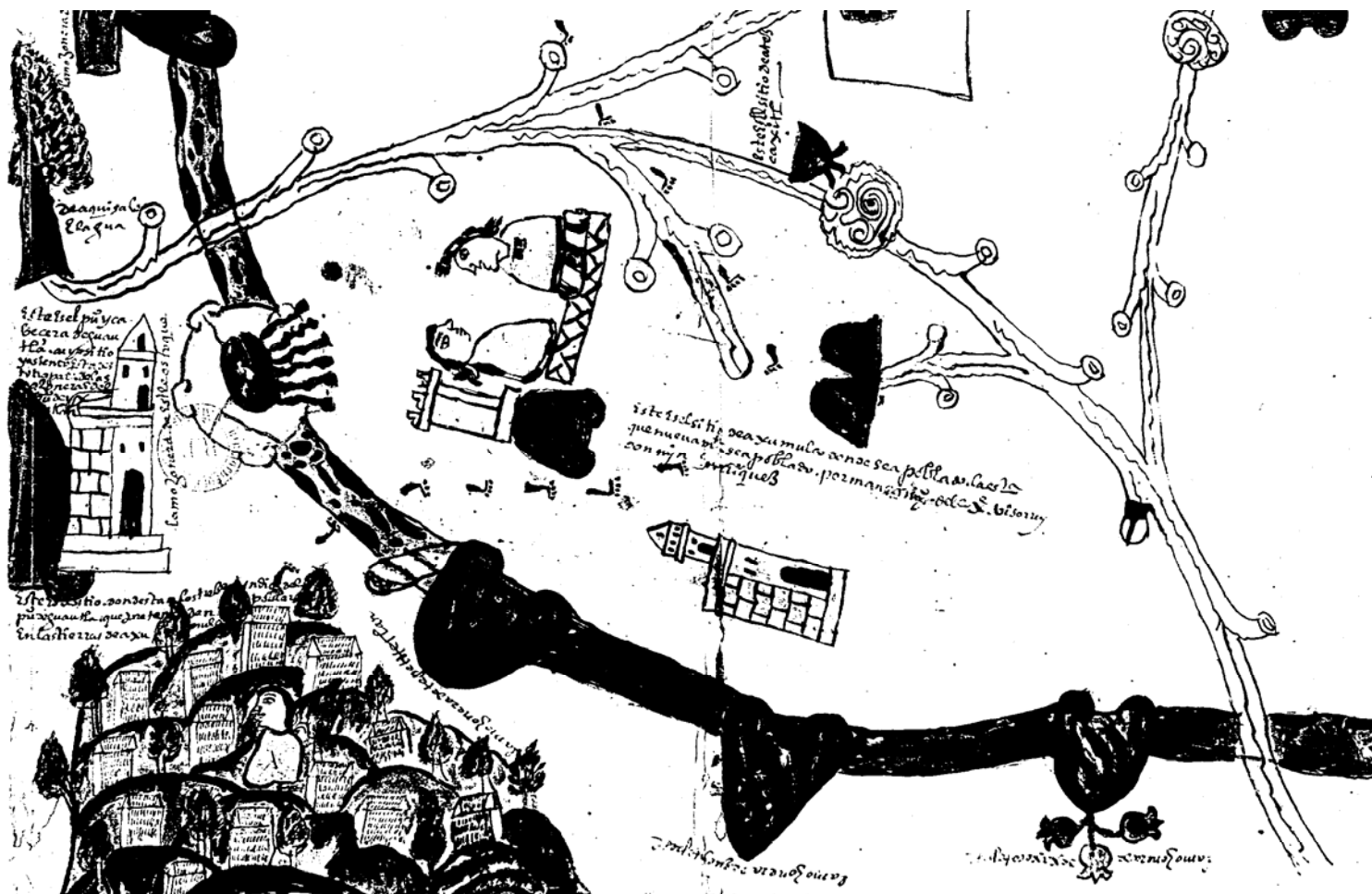


Figure 57. Lower portion of the Plan topographique d'Ixcatlan. (BNP)



Figure 58. View of San Pedro Nodón.



Figure 59. The settlement of San Pedro Nodón.

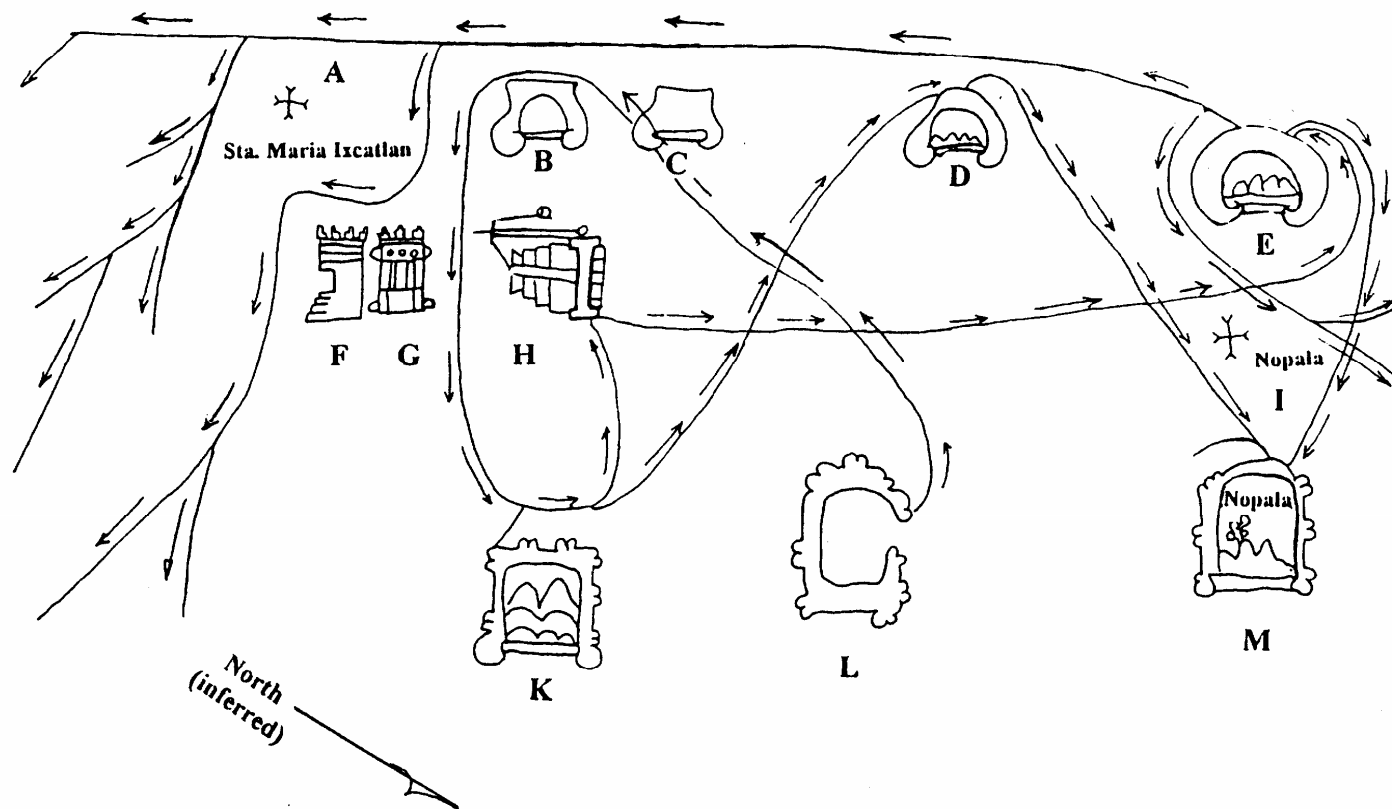


Figure 60. Lehmann's sketch of the Lienzo de Ixcatlan. (After Rincón, 1996a)

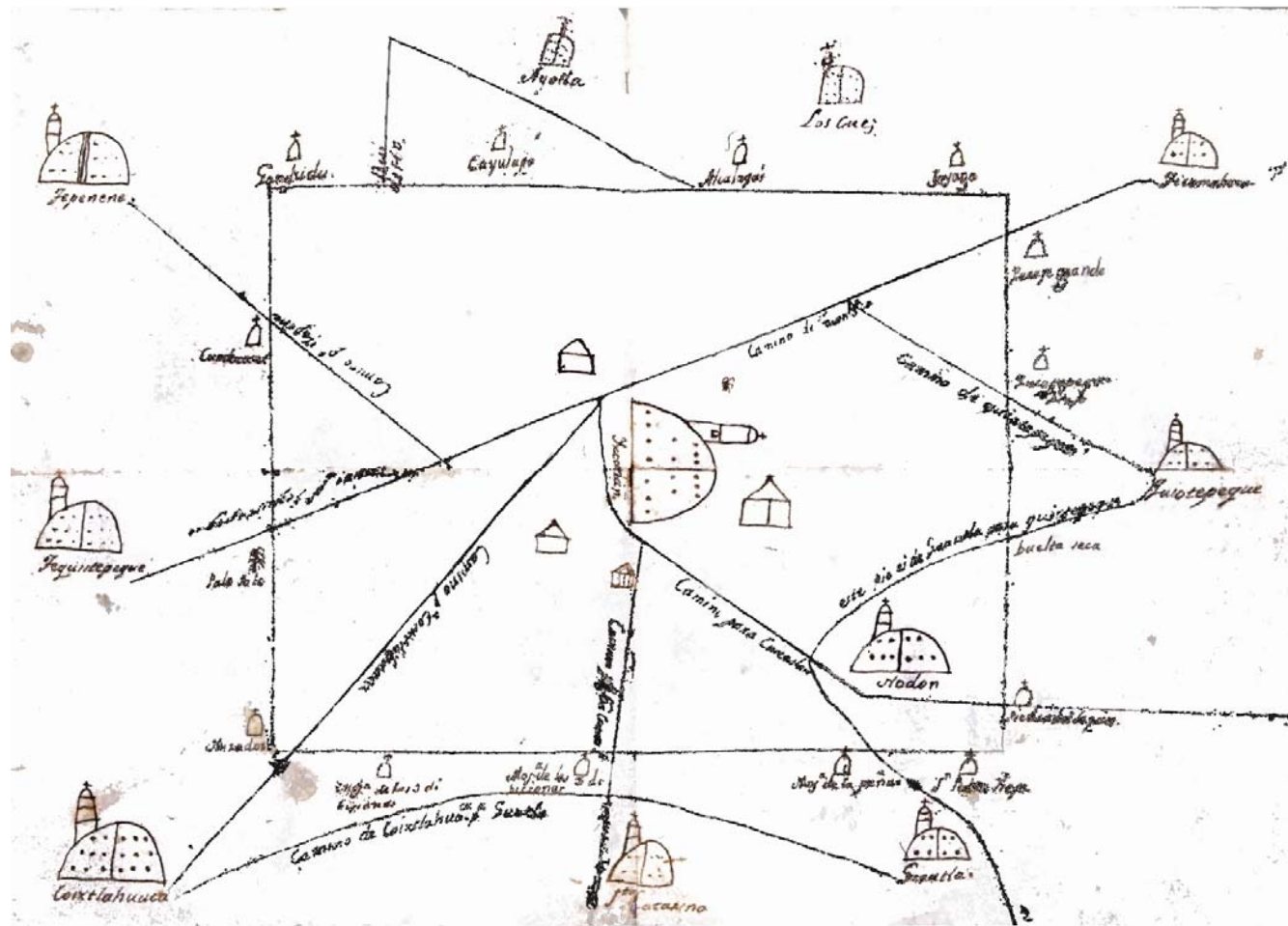


Figure 61. Boundary map of Ixcatlan, n.d. (AMSMI)

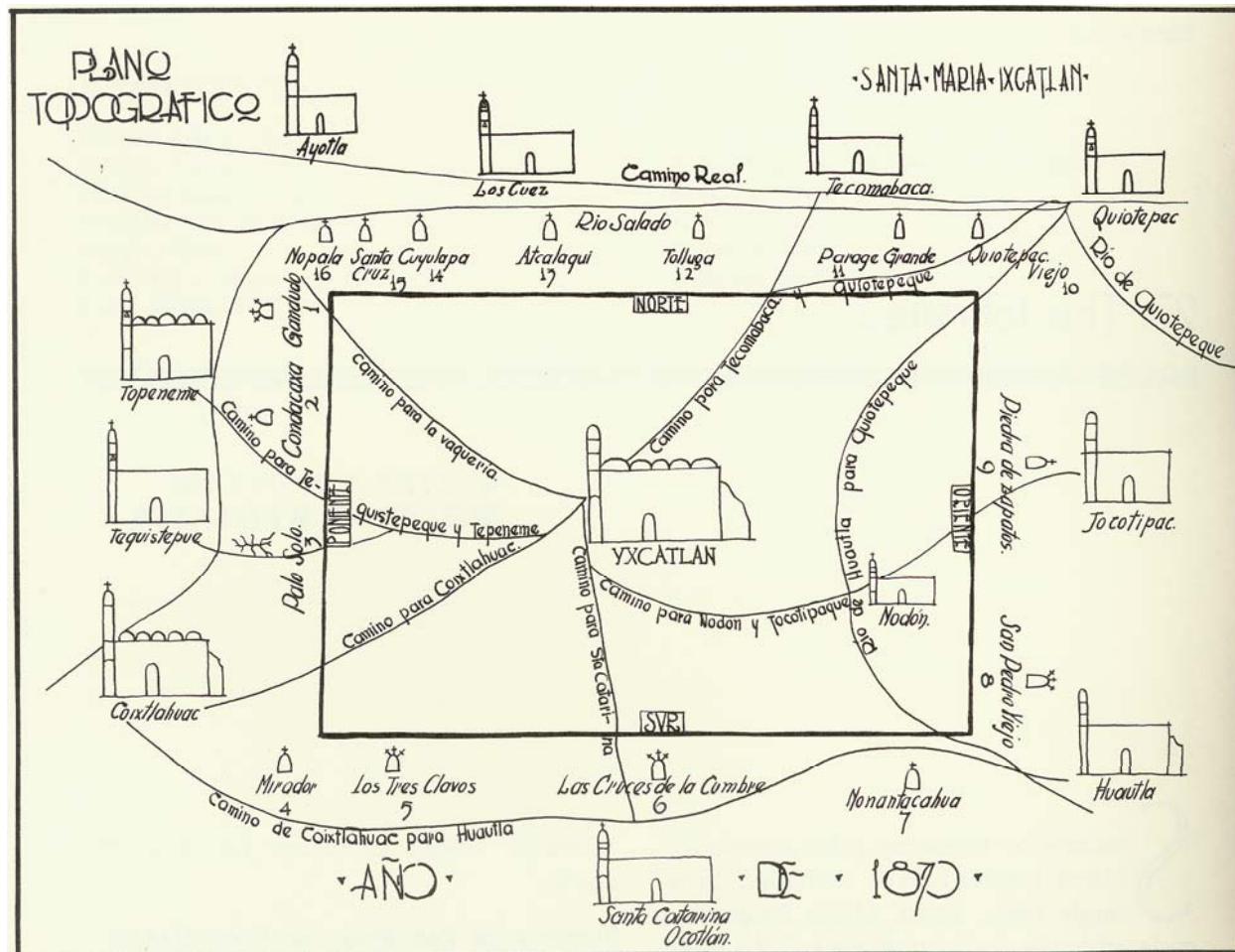


Figure 62. Map of Ixcatlan from 1870. (After Glass, 1975)



Figure 63. The mojónera at Gandudo.

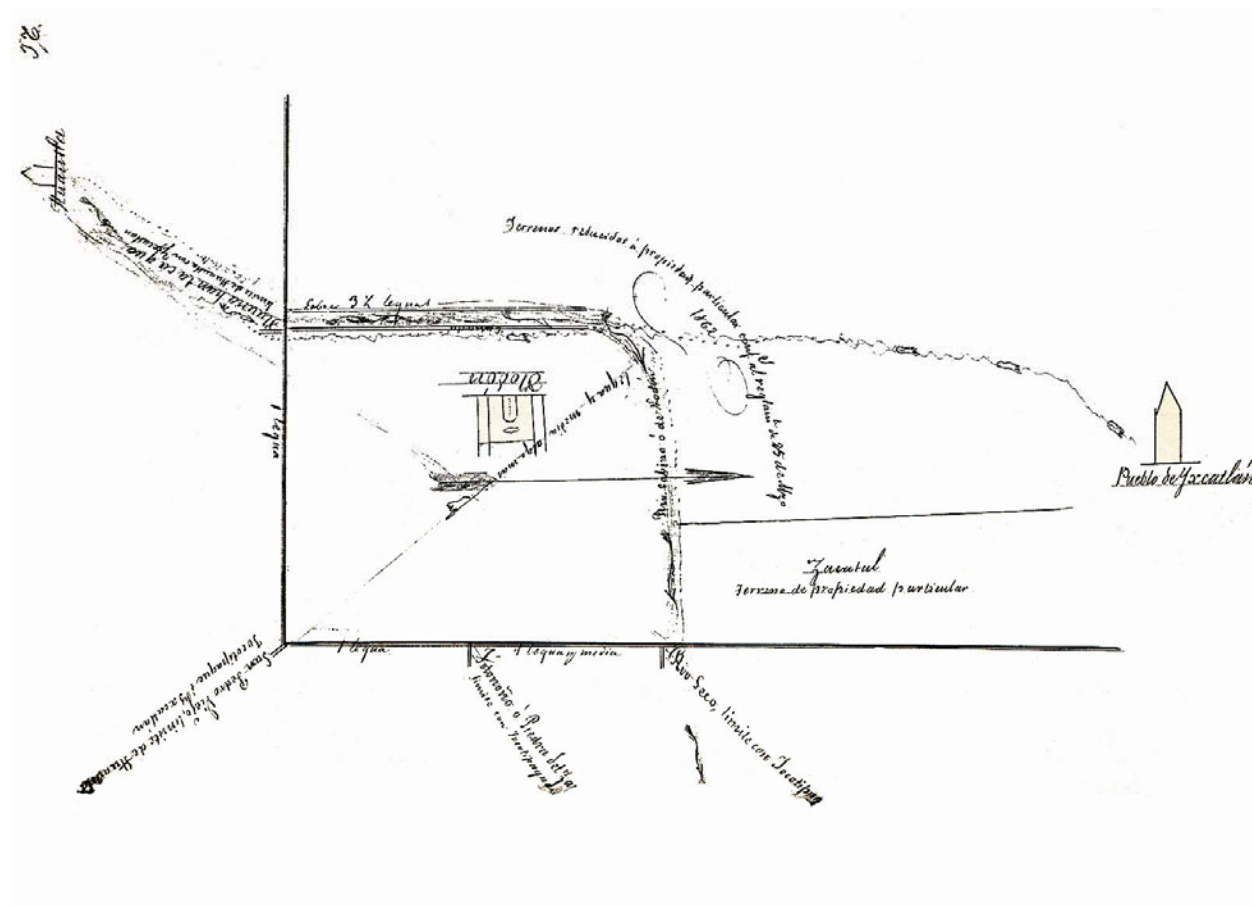


Figure 64. Map of San Pedro Nodón, 1891. (AGEO)

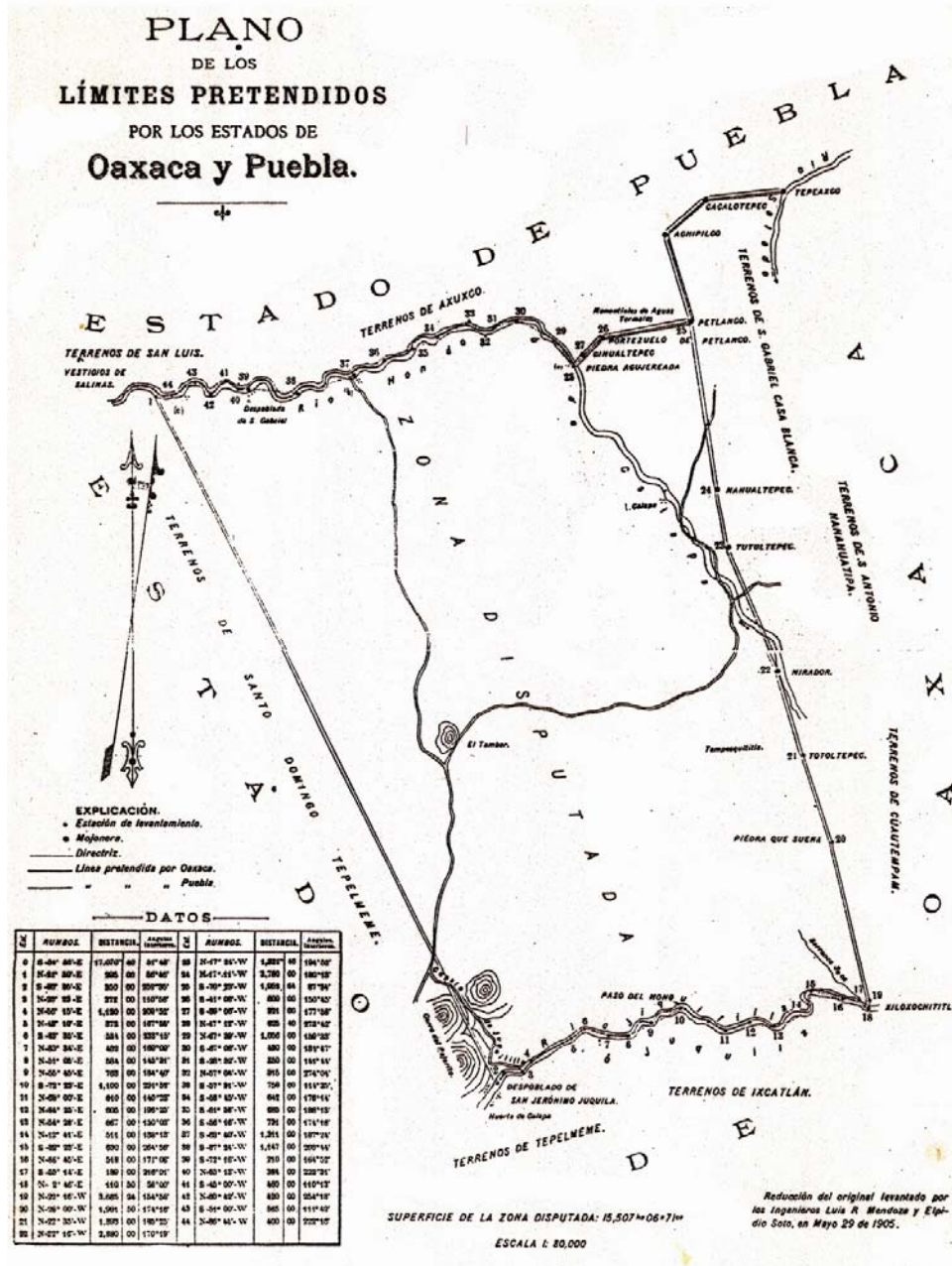


Figure 65. The area along the Río Xuquila disputed by Oaxaca and Puebla.
(After Uriarte, 1908)



**Figure 66. Map of the ejido of Ixcatlan based on the resolución presidencial.
(by the author)**

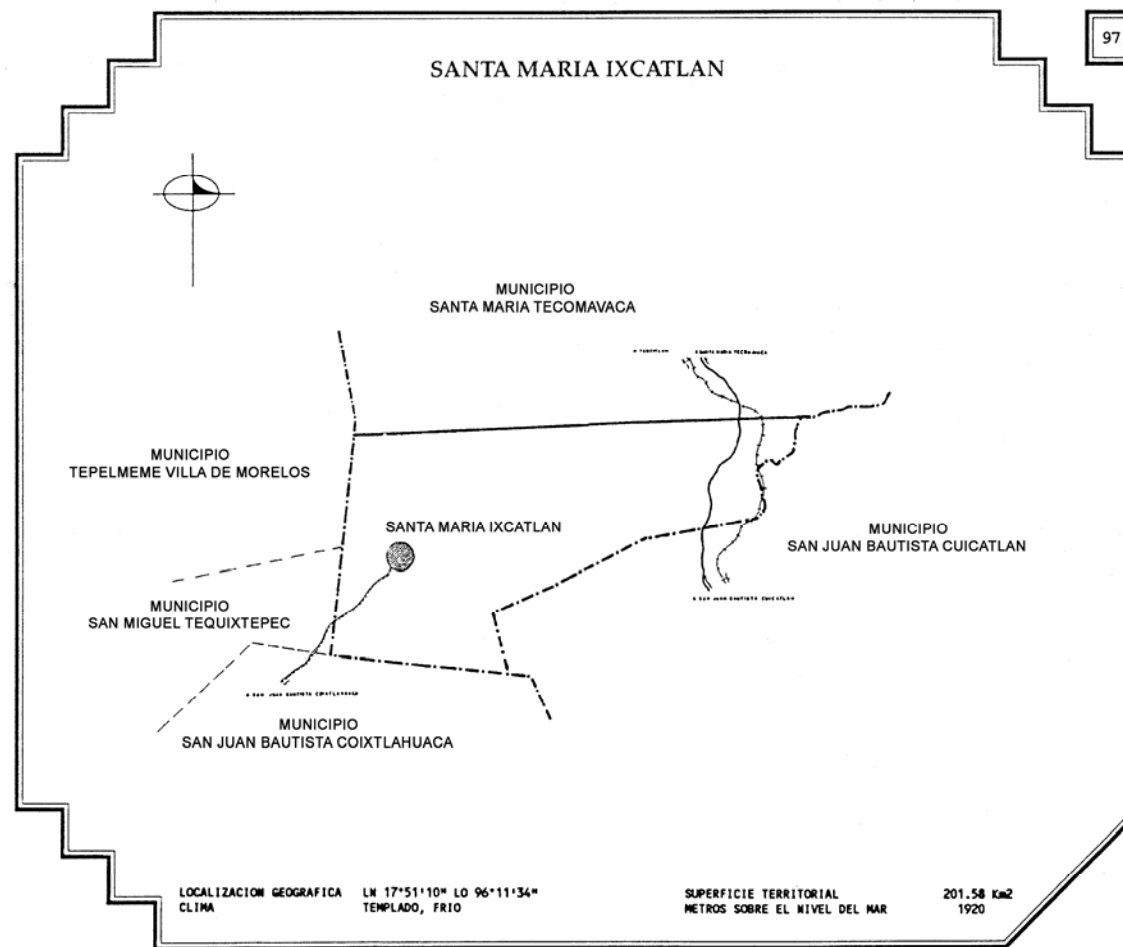


Figure 67. Map of Santa María Ixcatlán (COPLADE)

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Vita

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